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The Art Ensemble of Chicago

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NEWSWIRED

STEVE LACY'S long-awaited new ballet 'Futurities' receives its grand premiere at the Opera House, Festival of Lille, 15 and 16 November. Lacy has built his project around the texts of American poet Robert Creeley.

Lacy's regular septet (vocalist Irene Aebi, reedsman Steve Potts, trombonist George Lewis, pianist Jeff Gardner, bassist Jean Jacques Avenel and drummer Oliver Johnson) will be augmented by harpist Gude Knebush and acoustic guitarist Barry Wedgle.

Dance and choreography is by Douglas Dunn and Elsa Wolliaston on sets designed by American abstract painter Kenneth Noland. ■



IAK KILBY

WHILE Affinity have been doing a magnificent job re releasing old Bethlehem Records material here the label tself has been resurrected in the States as a division of the International Jazz Emporium Corporation The first reissues (of Mingus, Mel Torme and Chris Connor) are expected as albums, cassettes *and* compact discs ■

Chris Connor — on compact disc soon



TWO ONE-DAY Jazz courses have been organised by jazz educator Owen Bryce

A practical approach to Dixieland is being explored at Malvern Hills College, Worcestershire, 3 November (apply to the college direct)

His basic jazz improvisation course is taking place at the Arts Studio, Regents Circus, Swindon (4th) applications to Tony Hazell, Community Arts Studio Swindon Town Hall ■

REGULAR instrumental jazz workshops are now running every Saturday morning at Selwood School, Berkley Road, Frome, Somerset.

Workshop leader is tenorist John Barton and the team will be augmented by Chris Biscoe and his quintet early next year. For details, telephone Exeter (0392) 218368. ■



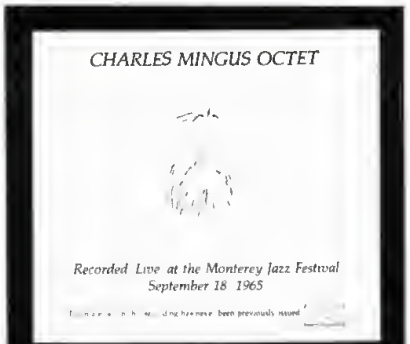
Michal Urbaniak

UPCOMING album releases include Polish violinist Michal Urbaniak's *Urbaniax* (Sonet); Chico Freeman's *Tangents* with Bobby McFerrin (Elektra Musician); Stan Getz and pianist Albert Dailey's *Poetry* (Elektra Musician); John Abercrombie's *Night* featuring keyboardist Jan Hammer and Mike Brecker (ECM); Jack de Johnette's Special Edition *Album*, *Album* including reedsman John Purcell, tenorist David Murray and tuba-player Howard Johnson (ECM).

On the home-front – Bristol-based Spirit Level, featuring tenorist Paul Dunmall, release their second album under the aegis of Tony Williams' label Spotlite. ■

PLUTO Books launch two tomes this month of interest to those of you who ascribe to *The Wire's* 'And

The Rap Attack – David Toop's history of rapping, with photographs by Patricia Bates – is published on 15 November (£5 95) Two days later, the heavily illustrated *Signed Sealed Delivered* appears by Sue Steward and Sheryl Garratt – featuring the true life stories of women in pop, including some revealing interviews (£5 95) ■



EAST COASTING Records in the States – formed by Susan Mingus and Fred Cohen – has reissued Mingus' extraordinary *Music Written For Monterey, 1965, Not Heard ... Played In Its Entirety At UCLA.*

The two-album live recording, uneveilable for 18 years, wes originally released through Mingus' own meil-order lebel. The new issue is in a hand-numbered, limited edition, with a seven-inch single of previously unreleased music from Monterey 1965. Other unissued meteriel from Mingus, Jackie McLean and Kenny Dorham could also be eired through the lebel soon.

The rere Mingus reissue has already found its wey into London's Dobell's (selling fest) end Mole Jezz ere aweiting delivery, to sell around £25 to £30 each (e snip for en album thet previously changed hands for £100 plus). But *hurry* ... Failing that, East Coasting Records can be contacted at P.O. Box 866, Ansonie Station, New York, NY 10023, USA. ■

TOMMY SMITH, the seventeen year old saxophonist from Scotland, and his 'International Quartet' received a standing ovation at Berkelee College of Music in Boston last month during a concert of Tommy's own compositions specially written for the event Tommy Smith, majoring in Professional Music at Berklee, is already being tipped for a top-flight international career ■

Tommy Smith — rave of Berklee



BLACK SAINT/SOUL NOTE, the Italian-besed record lebels (distributed by Projection Records, Leigh-on-See), heve made an auspicious entry into the compact disc market.

The impressive first betch includes David Murray's *Home* and *Ming*, George Adams' *Hand To Hand*, Max Roach's *In The Light*, the World Saxophone Quartet's *Revue*, Golson–Fermer's *Jazztet*, Kenny Drew's *Far Awey*, George Russell's *Live In An American Time Spirel* and Art Farmer's *Mirage*. ■

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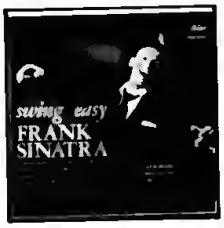






























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NEWSWIRED

CONGRATULATIONS to all concerned at the Ronnie Scott Club on reaching their twenty-fifth birthday – a quarter-century as London's most famous jazz centre.

Special club events celebrations include Johnny Griffin and Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis (till 10 Nov); singer-pianist Blossom Dearie (12–17); 'Capital Radio Salutes Ronnie Scott's 25th Anniversary' – top British musicians, different every night (19–24); Dizzy Gillespie (26, possibly till 8 Dec); and George Melly (10 Dec for three weeks).

When asked how it felt to be twenty-five, Ronnie replied: 'It has mede e happy men very old . . .'.

The birthday celebretions coincide with the recently launched *Début* magezine devoting their latest issue to the club's celebretions, complete with a double elbum of musiciens who have appeared at Ronnie's over the years. ■

GUITARISTS John Etheridge and Gary Boyle take their trios on a Jezz Services tour this month.

Dates: Upstairs at the Richmond, Brighton (9 Nov); White Lion Hotel, Exeter (10); Quay Club, Plymouth (11); Campus West Theatre, Welwyn Garden City (13); Premises, Norwich (14); The Roebuck, Lewisham (15); West End Centre, Aldershot (16); Seven Dials, Covent Garden (17); Avon Gorge Hotel, Bristol (18); Corner House Hotel, Newcastle (20); Leadmill, Sheffield (21); Band on the Wall, Manchester (22); Bradford Hotel, Liverpool (23); Darlington Arts Centre (24); Leeds Trades Club (25); Dovecot Arts Centre, Stockton (27); Vino's Wine Bar, Nottingham (28).

Etheridge's trio has Paul Rogers on bess end Nigel Morris on drums. Gary Boyle's Triple Echo will feature bassist Steve Williems and drummer Tim Franks from Manchester. ■

John Etheridge — on the road

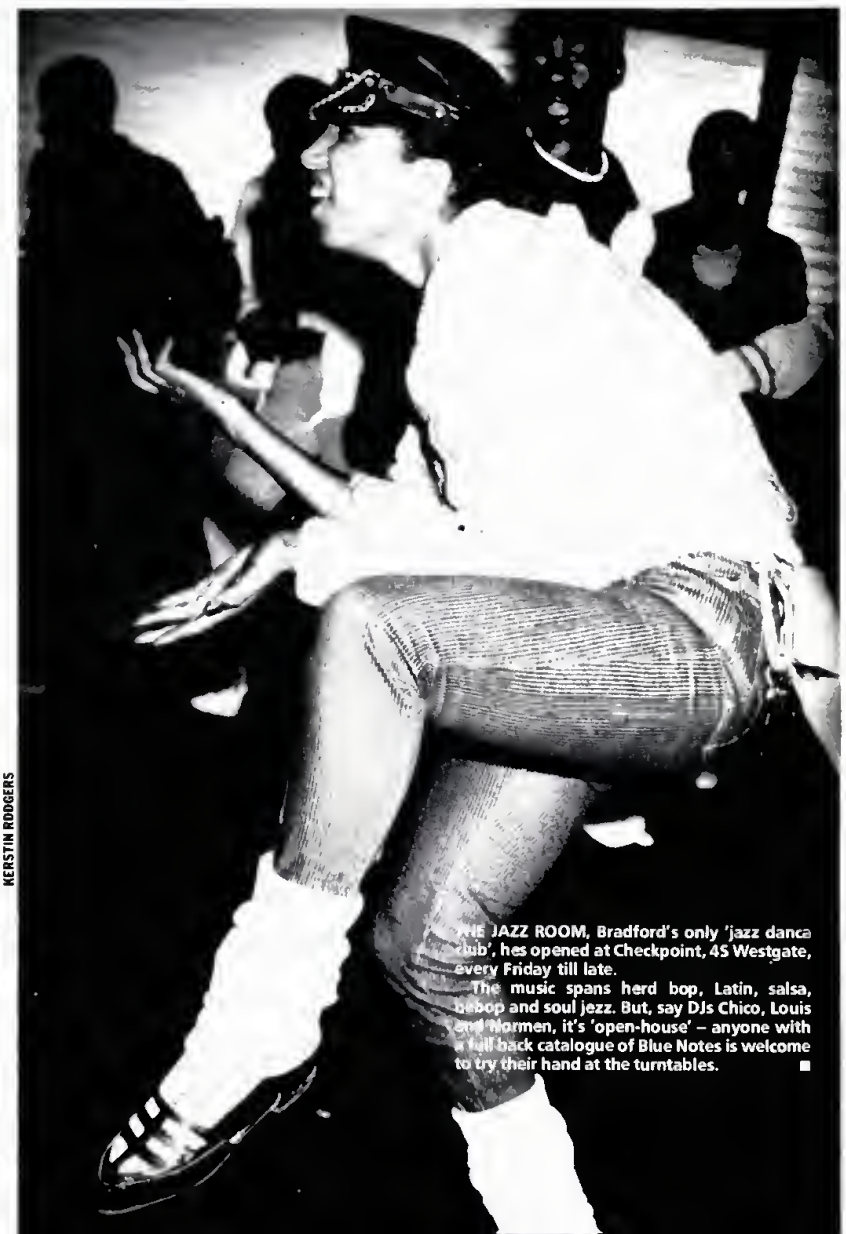


JAK KILBY

THE KOOLER – the fortnightly multi-media music venue run by guitarist Hugh Metcalfe – has moved to the Rosemary Branch, 2 Shepperton Road, London N1 (alternate Wednesdays). This recently opened free house is next to the Regents Canal. ■

HIGHLIGHTS at the 100 Club in London this month include the Satchmo All Stars' 'Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong' (3 Nov), Tony Douglas All Star Big Band (4), Stan Tracey Quintet featuring Art Themen and Dale Barlow (14), Jazz Turbo – the new group including Don Rendell, Esmond Selwyn and Mario Castronari (19), benefit for pianist Fred Hunt with the Humphrey Lyttelton Band featuring Benny Waters, Al Casey and Kenny Daverne (21) ■

SOUTH HILL Arts Centre in Bracknell plays host to a diverse selection of musicians this month including Pete Allen's Jazz Band with pianist Tommy Burton (6 Nov), Stephane Grappelli (12), Mike Carr Trio featuring Pete King (20), Benny Carter and Herb Ellis (27) ■



KERSTIN RODGERS

THE JAZZ ROOM, Bradford's only 'jazz dance club', hes opened at Checkpoint, 45 Westgate, every Friday till late.

The music spans herd bop, Latin, salsa, bebop and soul jezz. But, say DJs Chico, Louis and Normen, it's 'open-house' – anyone with a full back catalogue of Blue Notes is welcome to try their hand at the turntables. ■

THE BASS CLEF (35 Coronet St, London N1) continues its policy of good music from top British jazz artists ell this month

Highlights include Harry Beckett Quartet (8 Nov); Mario Castroneri Quartet (14); Tim Whitehead's Borderline (15); Mike Westbrook Band including 'Mama Chicago' (21); Blue Note Revisited with Ray Warleigh end Chris Pyne (22); Gordon Beck's 'Celebretion Suite' Quintet (28). ■

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LIVE WIRE

LOWELL FULSON
100 Club, London

LEON MORRIS

SO MANY of the great practitioners of the West Coast style of blues are now, alas, only memories It was, therefore, with considerable pleasure that the serried ranks of 100-Clubbers found in Lowell Fulson an artist who not only evoked memories of past giants like T-Bone Walker but who was very much a major-league performer himself

Fulson, a native Oklahoman but a resident of California for more than three decades, is one of those who helped shape the West Coast style, to suggest that he epitomises it is thus otiose However, his many recordings down the years have distinct hallmarks which dozens of lesser artists have striven to imitate the laconic singing, the big, dry guitar tone, the punches of brass To this, he has added a talent for above-average lyrics which give his blues an extra dimension and have made them favourites for inclusion on other artists' albums

After a warm-up set by a more than competent five-piece British band which featured Darts' piano-pounder Hammie Howell and drummer John Dummer as well as a strong, rootsy tenor-player, Fulson took the stage sporting a sharp white suit and a bright red guitar He swung into his two sets with the authority of a seasoned veteran but also with a verve not always encoun tered in a man who won't see sixty again

All the familiar Fulson hits were there to satisfy the audience the vigorous instrumental 'Guitar Shuffle', with echoes of T-Bone in its syncopated kickbacks, the strutting 'Talking Woman', the insinuating 'Too Many Drivers', the lilting, moody 'Black Nights', and his US Top 50 hit 'Tramp', later a success for Otis Redding and Carla Thomas

But this was no mere parade of hits Fulson included some of his lesser-known recordings and also tackled other people's compositions, as on his spirited rendition of Chick Willis' risque 'Stoop Down' Ending with his immortal 'Reconsider Baby', he left a perspiring audience well pleased and satisfied

Also on the bill was Chicago's Eddie C Campbell, now a resident of this country Playing tough, powerful blues guitar and displaying considerable showmanship, Eddie is a welcome addition to the ranks of British-based American bluesmen In fact, he doubles them Look out for him in your town his version of 'Driving Sideways' is quite spectacular **Mike Atherton**

Lowell Fulson



MARK MURPHY
The Basin, Ladbroke Grove, London

A HASTILY arranged gig that relied heavily on the clamp-like qualities of the windscreen wiper and one that, as with many things, benefited from its spontaneity

Many of those gathered at The Basin were of the new breed of bop-dance fans who possibly wouldn't know the Half Moon (the only other London date) from a half Nelson and it was pleasing to witness Murphy enjoying so many fresh faces and those faces lapping up the performance of a man who had previously only been a vinyl hero

The venue itself rests gorgeously alongside the canal near the Harrow Road, a club-come-(reasonably priced) restaurant that structurally does not best lend itself to two hundred-odd fans clammering for space in front of the band but, once the impact of visual curiosity wore off, the gathering spread themselves around the club to respond in individual comfort Actually, the removal of one of the interior pillars might help considerably but who can enjoy anything with three tonnes of rubble in their face

Utilising the air-tight and committed (what's one without the other) support of Allan Ganley on drums, Ken Baldock on bass and Peter Saberton at the keyboards, Murphy scatted, growled, clicked, sang in, out and around a selection of ballads and toe-tappers that peaked for me and for many on his renditions of 'On Green Dolphin Street', 'Parker's Mood' accompanied by Kerouac prose and the 'club smash' 'Milestones'

Murphy still has an amazingly clean and inventive vocal delivery, each note punctuated with a piano-playing movement, and this is now augmented with an appealing rasp from just behind the Adam's apple, courtesy of Mr F Time It means the voice that once frustrated many a critic as being 'too nice' now has some standard jazz vocal ammunition and Murphy mercilessly unloaded his entire arsenal, with no prisoners taken

Strangely enough, at the end of the second set, Murphy wound the band down to nothing so that he could cue the DJ into sticking on some tunes, but this was the gesture of a man not concerned with wallowing in encores but, instead, enthusing over the sight of new young jazz bods inspired by his performance into cutting up some rug

A fine time is always at hand when the artist enjoys the audience as much as the audience does him **Mark Webster**

Recollections

Essays, Drawings, Miscellanea

by Marion Brown

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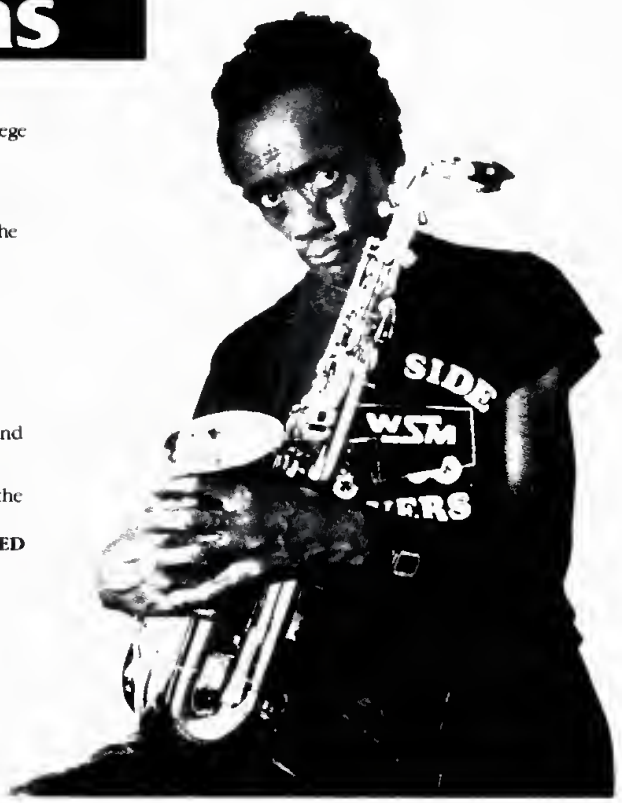
It is about Music, Spirituals and Blues, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Archie Shepp, Jazz, Fine Arts, Black life and being on Tour
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A PERSONAL OPINION
BY DAVID HOGAN

ON THE WIRE

OUR CULTURE – cosmopolitan world culture – is, and will continue to be, diverse and pluralistic. A multiplicity of styles, techniques and movements, ranging from the cautiously conservative to the rampantly experimental, will exist side by side: tonality and serialism, improvised and aleatoric music, as well as jazz with its many idioms and popular music.

Jazz is one of today's most authentically human protests. Though hopelessly enslaved, the American Negro created a true art form. This once slave music has become *the* music of the modern world.

The extrinsic greatness of jazz lies in its breath of conception, its ability to absorb players and influences from diverse cultures without losing its personal challenges; it has become an international movement, its *artists* coming from all over the world. Jazz improvisers are making immediate existential statements about their feelings towards themselves and the world around them. They create within predetermined though flexible forms with the spontaneity, originality and honesty that they possess.

What has happened, and what is happening, to the deepest human passions stems from many different causes. The only concern here is the fact that these 'spiritual' movements are totally confined within the technical world. Technique, be it TV, press, radio, etc encompasses the totality of present-day society. Jazz musicians are caught like flies in a bottle. Their attempts at culture, freedom and creative endeavour have become mere entries in the media's filing cabinet and, as a result, never heard.

We live in a world of great materialistic wealth and technology whose avowed spiritual and political concerns share the heady idealism of an artistic manifesto; proposing safeguards for the conscience of the individual and yet refusing to support or even recognise the indigenous creative accomplishments its artists have produced. Jazz remains unrecognised as a serious art form. No human activity is possible except as it is mediated and censored by the technical medium. Jazz musicians (and this applies equally to all the Time Arts) have a difficult life. They can only live by communicating but they have been deprived of the means without which they cannot communicate. They have become mere mouthpieces subject to the demands of the various techniques/media. This is the cause of the 'progressive' sterilisation of intellectual life in the modern world. Present-day methods of communication exclude all intellectual activity except what is so conventional that it has no decisive value. It goes without saying that the media are creating a culture in which, if large numbers are not involved, there is nothing at all.

Few ages have set so many problems of musicial form and technique as the twentieth century. The world of unfamiliar sounds opened up within the field of chordal and polyphonic music and the surmounting of tonality is even now almost too vast to be surveyed. It has been enlarged by the addition of a whole new world of auditory phenomena, a world of noises and electronically generated sounds that is now vying for equality of status with the first. Innovations have come in a headlong rush of new freedoms and new means of organisation. New schools and new movements have sprung up within the jazz tradition with astonishing regularity; of course, each with its special claim to exclusivity. In this state of out-and-out pluralism, of seemingly unresolvable contradictions, jazz – the music and its exponents – is searching for a common ground, drawing upon the world's ethnic folk resources, creating an individualistic art-music nature-reserve. The Jazz musician still retains the vestiges of the truly erotic culture. Jazz music is our nearest approximation to Boehms sensual language. The music does not refer to anything beyond itself:–

> 'No people understand anymore the sensual language, the birds in the air and the beasts in the forest do understand it according to their species. Therefore, man may reflect what he has been robbed of, and what he is to recover in the second birth. For in the sensual language all spirits speak with each other, they need no other language, for it is the language of nature.' *Jacob Boehms*

Although jazz has made important contributions to the rejuvenation of European music language, it is not necessary to judge jazz in perspective of European art. Instead, it invites us to broaden our view in order to make room for the only popular inspired music of our time which is universal and has not become lost in vulgarity. It is not a question of giving up what we have, but acquiring something else. It would be discouraging to think that jazz is not destined to have, sooner or later the exegisis it deserves. It is perhaps idle to speculate on what the music of the future will be. It is safe to prophesy that the future condition of the human race will determine the course jazz music and all music will take.

Finally, a common ground has been attained in the realm of shared beliefs and ideals, transcending at times above the purely artistic plane. Here jazz music is providing examples Spiritually, Physically and Psychologically that may serve as models for the future.

Jazz:–

is the expression of people who know only the culture of God, not an alien, inflicted culture.

A time will come when all art music will spring from a common folk source, when we shall embrace each other in these created works by the shared experience of a folk music. Jazz music binds together all humanity in one spirit, one happiness, one salvation. Jazz music is Life itself and should be Heard.

Radio is one of The 'Liberating Distractions' (Veille). It can and must deliver the individual from objective constraints. It is a public utility dealing in moral comfort, charged with offsetting the tragedies of family living, social pressures and the vexations of modern life.

Radio must compensate for the inhumanities of life in today's cities. In the milieu in which human beings are unable to make true friendships or to have profound experiences, *radio* can furnish them with appearances of reality, acquaintance and human proximity; it must captivate and reassure them.

Before the stains of human passion become lost amid the chromium gleam, before we have nothing more to lose, nothing to win – jazz music is life itself, and should be heard.

David Hogan

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Volume 1

Ragtime to Swing

By Max Horrison, Charles Fox and Eric Thacker

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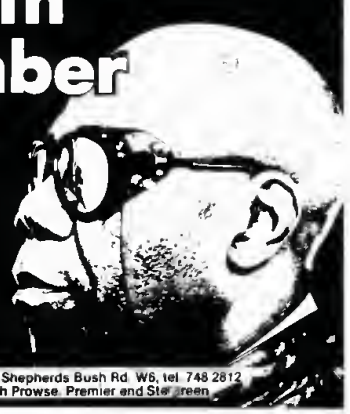
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THE MIKE ZWERIN COLUMN

READING about musicians who ruin their lives with chemical excess has become a bore, a cliché. Who wants to hear about one more zonked-out genius? This makes a sad story sadder because ruined role-models encourage disciples to ruin themselves. The story bears continuous repetition. But there's a happy ending to this one, and optimistic implications.

Two years ago, after several decades of escalating chemical self-abuse, altoist David Sanborn was sitting in his New York apartment staring with great affection at the fifth of scotch and quarter-ounce of cocaine on his table when the woman he loved called to say she loved him, too, but could no longer handle his excesses and had decided to split.

'Oh.' He shrugged. 'Well, bye.' He loved his chemicals more. Much more. That's all he ever thought about. Then suddenly it hit him. 'What am I doing to my life?'

He shivered, began to sweat, jumped up, dumped the scotch and the coke into the bathtub and called his friend Michael Brecker. 'I need help.' Brecker recommended psychiatric therapy, Alcoholics Anonymous and a nutritionist.

About that time, I managed to hustle an interview with Miles Davis in Paris. The first thing I noticed was that he had some weight on his bones for a change, and his skin was a glistening blue-black rather than its habitual ashen grey. 'I had to stop everything, Mike,' he told me. '*E-V-E-R-Y*thing.'

'Listen. I was snorting half-ounce of coke a day, right. I went out drinking brandy and beer around the clock. I'd get up at midnight and go out till noon, smoked four packs of cigarettes. I was using sleeping pills, too. One day I woke up and I couldn't use my right hand, couldn't straighten it out.

'I was taking physical therapy for the hand but it wasn't working. Cicely (his wife, Cicely Tyson) said let's go see Dr Shin. He gave me these needles – here, there, here – gave me herbs to clean my body out. Chinese medicine. I shed my skin, my skin shed. Dr Shin said don't drink anything cold. I swim 40 minutes every day. The only bad habit I got left is sweets.'

Miles, Sanborn, Brecker and Eric Clapton have all gone through a similar process in recent years. Sanborn has bumped into Mike Stern at Alcoholics Anonymous and rumour has Jaco Pastorius becoming less outrageous.

The apparent trend towards sobriety by major musicians, most of whom are playing noticeably better as a result, is one reason Sanborn says. 'Something really important and positive is about to happen. I can feel it.'

It's already happened to Miles; he has never played better trumpet and made more interesting music. It's certainly happening to Sanborn. His new-found youthful vigor is reminiscent of early Charlie Parker with Jay McShann, just beginning to pick up a serious head of steam.

In a sense, Bird is to blame. For years, he was *the* role model. It seemed impossible to be hip unless you were strung out, wired, drunk or all three if possible. But increased ingestion is like inflation; you need more to stay on the same level, the psychic (and financial) cost of 'hip' has soared. People began to wonder about the definition. 'Hip' may turn out to be square.

Add Buddhist chanters like Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock, Scientologists like Chick Corea, the clean young Marsalis brothers and Bill Evans to the growing breed and you end up with a fresh image.

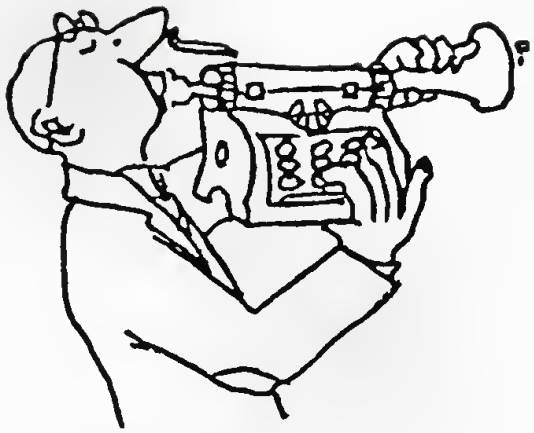
And probably fresher music. Sanborn says that one reason he made some of his more commercial records was that he owed his dealer a lot of money: 'I spent a lot of years not really thinking too much about what I was doing.' He's not saying he's ashamed of the music, or hates it, only that: 'It's one-dimensional, monochromatic. I feel limited by it at this point, it's not very challenging. I have some new ideas, I need time to work them out. Right now I just want to keep my wits about me and not drive myself nuts and start getting high again.'

If you are (like a lot of Americans) prone to construct conspiracy theories, you might suspect certain organisations of keeping musicians as stoned as possible to force them to produce commercial product. That seems a bit far-fetched to me, though without so much money going up so many noses and into all those veins, musical quality obviously becomes more affordable.

Even the strung-out won't deny that clear heads produce clear music, though it is the other side of the same coin, another extreme. The reformed tend to drink only mineral water, eat salt-free food, swallow mountains of vitamins. Another excess, another fixation. This might eventually cause sterility problems but that's America, no middle ground, both its weakness and the strength that produces musicians like we've been talking about.

As Sanborn describes playing with Gil Evans: 'Gil's music is different every time. Sometimes it doesn't work but when it does it's pure magic. Just like life – a little chaos, a little order.'

Mike Zwerin



ANDREW CYRILLE

IN CONVERSATION WITH VAL WILMER

WHEN ANDREW CYRILLE picks up his snaredrum, presses his nose to the skin and starts talking in tongues, the metal snare reverberates against the head with a message as old as music itself. Though today's head is made from plastic, the story the drummer tells is timeless. Essentially organic, it is directly related to playing music to make the crops grow. The drumset he sits at may have been conceived with a Western vision but Cyrille's cultural inheritance takes in Ashanti warriors playing *atumpan* talking-drums in the rain forest, Yoruba priests praising Shango on the *bata*.

Implicit in that African–American tradition is the view of the drummer as the person entitled to call the tune. Thus the exhaustive musical itinerary Cyrille set himself since he first came to the public's notice alongside such great innovators as saxophonist Coleman Hawkins and pianist Mary Lou Williams amounts to a comprehensive statement of his skills. That itinerary has encompassed every aspect of the Black music spectrum and has been as carefully documented on record by the drummer as one of his own precision-tooled solos. To those listeners who most readily identify him with the ten years he spent as Cecil Taylor's percussion partner, his recent Soul Note album, *The Navigator*, might seem a little conservative. For them Cyrille has a brisk response: 'If some people can only relate to that other (free) stuff, I feel sorry for them. I *love* doing it but I feel as though there's nothing wrong with being comprehensive *and* being a virtuoso, too.'

Cyrille's statement referred indirectly to the pragmatic approach to music that Eurocentric criticism has caused him to adopt for survival. Although he has taken percussion to new heights of expression through his concert work with fellow drummers Rashied Ali, Milford Graves and Don Moye and such classic solo recordings as *What About?* and *The Loop*, the Western audience has never allowed him the degree of artistic latitude afforded, say, a violinist or pianist. 'In other words,' explains Cyrille, 'If I have to come out and play with knitting needles on my cymbals, most people would think of it as a novelty. They won't hear what I'm doing as being of equal nobility as any other in the family of instruments.

'This is not a drum society. People are not accustomed to listening to the nuances of rhythm being struck on a surface. I'm not saying that I won't continue to do my percussion thing. I love that because that's what I am but, at the same time, I also feel I want to express myself in other areas. And I have that capacity.'

Expressing himself in those other areas has been a major function of Maono – it means 'feelings' – formed in 1975. The music he makes with Maono is rooted in the extensions of bebop pioneered by people like Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane but it is as full of surprises as one of Cyrille's own solos. The forms are ones that have been exercised before yet, as the leader points out, by giving them different structures, the results are totally contemporary. For him, this is an acknowledgement of the changing same. He is concerned to play the



VAL WILMER

best of today with a vision that takes in yesterday and tomorrow. It's a vision inspired by years in the drumseat behind players as diverse as Nellie Lutcher, Cecil Taylor, Freddie Hubbard and Carla Bley. His grasp of tradition and his own involvement in it is so finely attuned that when talking about a particular musical figure he played in 1982, he was able to relate back to playing the exact same thing with Coleman Hawkins over twenty years earlier.

VW: *Despite the fact that the music that was once considered to be 'avant garde' is now understood more widely, things haven't improved that much for the 'creative' musician. Are you surprised?*

AC: Creative music from this tradition has always encountered difficulty. Of course I had hoped that things would get better if the musicians presented themselves in a certain way, took care of business, presented the music conscientiously. But looking at the history, in a sense I can understand why it hasn't improved and that's because, to a large degree, the social situation takes such a long time to improve.

I remember stories told to me by Walter Bishop. There was one in particular where Charlie Parker had been straight and gone to a gig in Pittsburgh. He was all decked out in a tuxedo – whatever – he had his string section behind him and the rhythm section, and maybe two or three people showed up to the club. So, knowing those kind of things which happen, and experiencing it in my own career twenty years ago, doing gigs with Cecil when seven or ten people might show up to a concert at a place that could house 250 or 300, I still realise that it's something that sometimes goes part and parcel with the art form with which we're involved. It hasn't happened to me in a very long time – I do get some work, but it's not as much as I need – but I do understand it.

The response to that is always that the music is not in touch with what the public wants, with the heartbeat.

The heartbeat? Well, I don't know what you mean. You'd have to elaborate.

Well, disco.

. . . *continues on page 51*▶



BOOK REVIEWS

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BLACK JAZZ
by Demsey J. Travis
(URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CHICAGO, £20)

THERE ARE jazz books and *jazz* books

Most of the former are formularised, interchangeable and aimed at the brainwashed-from-birth No deviations are allowed Blacks dance in Congo Square, ragtime evolves and, sooner or later, jazz comes up the river from New Orleans No messin'.

Elsewhere we might read that Hambone Herbert Hertenflager was born 1938, recorded two sides with Diz in 1939 (the unissued takes being the greatest in the annals of jazz) and was the four-hundred-and-thirty-first musician to sign up with Norman Granz, playing badly recorded rattle on the JATP-Fred Astaire set

Boredom unlimited really Set such fare to music and you'd have an undistinguished lullaby Thankfully, Demsey J Travis' 543-pager is a real *jazz* book – the sort that transcribes into a full-blooded *stomp*

A black Chicagoan who, at sixteen, was the youngest bandleader in the American Federation of Musicians, Travis played the Midwest Savoy during its heyday, appearing there on a mammoth 1938 jam-session that saw his then sixteen-piece aggregation lining up alongside outfits that included those of Fletcher Henderson, Jimmie Noone, Johnnie Dodds, Willie Bryant and twenty other leaders He remembers, too, the days when the Syndicate became jazz masters, able to give the thumbs-up or the elbow-out to careers of such artists as Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Lena Horne and Earl Hines Duke, Travis recalls, was once threatened by a West Side mob during an engagement at Chicago's Paradise Theatre Then Al Capone issued the edict 'Duke Ellington is not to be bothered on the West Side or in the Loop ' After which, Duke's gangster problem resolved itself

The Jim Crow era, when eight black bouncers, captained by the six foot-eight Grover 'Big Boy' Chapman, ushered whites into the best seats at the Club DeLisa, is also recalled, the author

JAZZ MASTERS SERIES –
GIL EVANS by Raymond Horricks;
DIZZY GILLESPIE by Raymond Horricks;
BILLIE HOLIDAY by Burnett James;
CHARLIE PARKER by Brian Priestley
(SPELLMOUNT, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, £3.95 EACH)

THESE slim, relatively expensive volumes have the laudable aim of presenting key figures in the history of jazz in a way which will be accessible to newcomers to the music. They adopt a common format – an introductory essay, a dozen photographs of the artist and selective discographies by Tony Middleton, except in *Charlie Parker*, for which Brian Priestley has compiled his own. The discographies are lengthy, occupying a quarter to a third of each book and, while they won't satisfy devotees of the genre, they are valuable reference for most purposes.

Unfortunately, there ends enthusiasm for all but Priestley's book. All adopt a biographical approach to their subject, inevitably less than exhaustive but, in three cases, hardly even adequate Priestley alone shows that he is fully conversant with the existing literature and can go beneath the often sensational surface of the jazz life and relate career to context. Priestley continually brings us back to the music with specific reference to compositions and performances. Alone of the three writers, he has a final chapter devoted solely to the implications of Parker's achievement and, by implication, that of bebop as a whole, for the development of jazz. The creative role of music criticism is to lead readers to broaden their range of

A HISTORY OF JAZZ IN BRITAIN 1919–1950
by Jim Godbolt
(QUARTET BOOKS, LONDON, £14.95)

GROWING older does not mean that one forgets the gaffes of yesteryear – even those which created no embarrassment at the time. In 1933, for instance, wearing short trousers and, no doubt, toying with a yo-yo, I suddenly heard the Duke Ellington Orchestra broadcasting from London, thought 'what a dreadful noise!', and switched the wireless set off.

It is a trifle irrelevant, and no consolation at all, to discover at this late stage that the band was being paid only £30 by the BBC. Yet details of that sort – what the musicians wore, the tunes they played, whether the stolid British cheered or simply felt bewildered – are what Jim Godbolt excels at providing in his somewhat truncated history And not just about Duke's band, of course, but Louis Armstrong, too. After the war comes Sidney Bechet's illicit performance at the Winter Garden Theatre, here documented at length for the very first time.

What those events have in common is that the musicians were all Americans. And it is the impact made by visiting jazzmen which really forms the nub of this chronicle. The home-grown product tends to get passed over much too briskly, often with a curious lopsidedness of emphasis. For instance, details are given of Spike Hughes putting together his Decca Dents, the earliest of his recording groups and one that paid obeisance to Red Nichols's Five Pennies. Yet there is no discussion of the much superior music that Hughes made after falling under the spell of Duke Ellington. And the fact that in the tenor saxophonist Buddy Featherstonaugh, Hughes was deploying perhaps the earliest British jazz soloist of genuine originality.

Reginald Foresythe gets dismissed as 'arty'. True, he was unlucky in not always finding – or picking – musicians who could turn his ideas into jazz, and his liking for smart titles (à la Lord Berners) led the naive to mistrust his sincerity, yet Foresythe was both gifted and laudably ambitious – and his use of assorted woodwinds was more adventurous than anything comparable being done in America at that time Similarly, there is only a passing mention (in a personnel) of Foresythe's frequent collaborator, Arthur Young, something of a spendthrift talent but still worth writing about Even more surprising is a failure to credit the role played in popularising jazz by Nat Gonella and his Georgians, the only group, apart from Joe Daniels' Hot Shots, to make a full-time living out of the music in Britain during the Thirties, touring the theatres and music-halls.

The Twenties – and just before – come off better, commencing with the impact made by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and, in a more limited way, by Will Marion Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra (well, by Bechet really), yet ignoring the period during World War I when a rather rowdy species of orchestral ragtime anticipated the shocks to come. (The version of 'St Louis Blues', recorded in London in 1917 by Ciro's Club Coon Orchestra, may be more energetic

claiming that it wasn't smart for white musicians to be caught jamming at black area rent parties in those days

'Why don't you white fellows learn to stay in your own neighbourhood?', a judge asked Art Hodes and Davey Tough after they'd been busted at a 48th and State Street 'castle' – a question that caused Hodes to retort 'What would have happened to us if Christopher Columbus had stayed in *his* own neighbourhood?'

Travis' book is full of such humour

Apart from the scene-setting, the mass of historical detail, the incredible array of illustrations ranging from shots of venues and musicians through to line-ups of club dancing-troups and a melee of fascinating posters – thirty interviews are included All strictly verbatim shots' and much the better for it, these pieces provide a great insight into the lives of not only such name musicians as Clark Terry, Sy Oliver and Johnny Griffin but also lesser-knowns like Franz Jackson, Eddie Johnson and David A Young, along with those of singers such as Nancy Wilson, Maxine Sullivan and Viola Jefferson

Also included are entertainers like impressionist-dancer-comedian George Kirby, whose account of his battle against drug addiction is nothing less than terrifying 'I was sick as a dog, I was lying on the concrete floor because they had removed the bed I started hemorrhaging from my nose, mouth, penis, rectum and eyes I don't know how it started, it just started The rats smelled blood and started coming at me. There was a Black Muslim in the cell with me He was wearing big C C work boots with heavy steel toes and he started beating the rats off, shouting "Man down, man down!" '

There are certain imperfections in *An Autobiography Of Black Jazz*, including a fair number of mis-spelt names – singer Pha Terrell is called Faye Terrell throughout one chapter, Sister Rosetta Tharpe is listed as Thorpe, Arnette Cobb becomes Cobbs etc – but nothing really detracts from the overall excellence of Travis' highly personal, warmly human, history of jazz

As I said at the onset, this is a *jazz* book, *jazz* as in Hampton, Lunceford, Basie and Louis Jordan

When reading, hold on to it tight, lest it jumps right out of your hands!

Fred Dellar

An Autobiography Of Black Jazz can be obtained from Compendium Books, 234 Camden High Street, London NW1 price, £20 plus £2 p&p

listening, or to find new experiences in familiar works. Priestley's all-too-brief discussion of the view that the bebop revolution was one of rhythm, not harmony as is usually held, does just that, and is essential reading.

Burnett James' *Billie Holiday* adds nothing to the familiar story and tells little about the music other than the well-worn formula that Billie could make inferior songs into works of art. It is ironic that James reminds us that Billie objected to 'low-grade journalists' who were obsessed with her extra-musical problems and who she thought undervalued her post-war work. James' book is largely about extra-musical problems – drugs, men, bad relations with promoters, agents and the police. The opportunity to demonstrate the value of her later singing is not taken. Billie Holiday's affection for dogs receives more attention than her work with Mal Waldron.

Raymond Horricks' volumes are less satisfactory still. Precious space is wasted tracing the careers of 'influences' at unnecessary length. Alongside such redundant information, both books are thin on just those issues which most need discussion. Gil Evans' collaboration with Miles is already well documented elsewhere, yet takes up most of the biography on this occasion as well. A transcription of a short interview and impressionistic notes on a couple of British concerts take the place of an account of his career since 1962.

Dizzy Gillespie's career is an intriguing one. A pioneer of bop, by 1956 he was doing propaganda tours for the US State Department. He may have had his eyes open but Horricks is able to quote an official who told Gillespie that 'This music has made our job so much easier'. Later, Gillespie was as reactionary about the New Thing as Armstrong had been about bebop. Here is the subject for an illuminating study of the relationship between bebop, the entertainment industry and the changing place of jazz in American culture. Horricks disappoints on all counts. After a stale account of the genesis of bebop, the book alternates between anecdote and lists of gigs, engagements and tours. Gillespie's influence on trumpet-playing was a major one but is not articulated here. Clifford Brown and Fats Navarro aren't even named.

Biography and study of the recordings of one or two major musicians is as easy a way as any into jazz but with the exception of the Parker book, new listeners won't find much direction here. Too often writers' enthusiasms supplant rather than complement careful exposition and detailed analysis.

Jeremy Crump

than imaginative but it pointed the way that things would be going) There is, too, a reasonable account of the way British players coped with what was happening - and with tolerable success, for they were much more adept at working within the classic styles of white heroes such as Bix and Red Nichols and Miff Mole than at attempting to emulate Armstrong and Hawkins and Eldridge and other black romantics of the following decade.

But quibbling about this and lamenting the absence of that rather obscures the fact that Goldbolt's book really is exceptionally entertaining. He has ransacked the pages of the *Melody Maker* and other contemporary magazines and come up with plenty of period gems, among them the animadversions of Sir Henry Coward ('jingly tunes, jerky rhythms, unquestionably grotesque forms, including untuned gramophones and noises from domestic utensils' was one of Coward's reactions to what he imagined to be jazz). And there is the *Melody Maker*'s founder and first editor, Edgar Jackson, finding Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers irredeemably old-fashioned (he was to do the same with Sidney Bechet a dozen years later). Yet Jackson, very much a power in the British jazz scene for close on three decades, emerges from Godbolt's narrative as a somewhat unlikely hero. Which makes this the place to correct a trivial error: in the late Fifties the present writer, along with Alun Morgan, 'ghosted' many of Jackson's record reviews (for five bob a time, or 7s 6d if you supplied details of the personnel) – but only for *The Gramophone*, never in the *Melody Maker*.

Godbolt's position as manager of George Webb's Dixielanders puts him in a strong position to chronicle the beginnings of British revivalism. And he is admirably frank about the drawbacks of that movement. Understandably enough, he provides only a sketchy account of the arrival of bebop (he does not, for instance, seem to have consulted Tony Hall's invaluable chapter on that subject in *The Decca Book of Jazz*). The fact that the history stops in 1950, at a point when British jazz was about to make a leap forward, will probably seem inexplicable to many readers of *The Wire*. Nevertheless, the author is entitled to set his own limits and operate inside them. Yet it seems fair to point out that the best was yet to come.

No jazz writer reviewing a book by a colleague can resist drawing attention to a few fallings from grace. In a list of books published in Britain before the war, for instance, there is no mention of Wilder Hobson's excellent *American Jazz Music*. It is odd, too, that Godbolt omits to mention that Fred Elizalde's band was twice taken off the air by the BBC following protests from listeners about the 'hot music' played during broadcasts from the Savoy Hotel. And although one hesitates to defend the Musicians Union of the Thirties and Forties (for almost twenty years, after all, they prevented me from seeing the musicians I most admired), it is only fair to point out that the inter-union ban began in 1934 after the American Federation of Musicians stopped Jack Hylton taking his band to the United States.

Finally, a personal note of gratitude for being reminded (via a quote from Brian Davis) of the alto saxophonist Alan Doniger (not Doninger), certainly a fiery player. I knew him in Bournemouth just after the war where, as a semi-pro, he would upset his more sedate colleagues at the end of a dance by treating the National Anthem as a chord sequence for blowing on, just like 'I Got Rhythm' or 'How High The Moon'

Charles Fox

BENNY CARTER: THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES



BENNY CARTER got his nickname because he was a virtuoso on so many instruments. But that versatility may have counted against him claims Earl Okin as he looks back on the man whose status as jazz's first great alto voice is in danger of being forgotten.

ONE OF the sillier games in which jazz fans and record collectors indulge is to ask one another to name their favourite three trumpeters, pianists, singers and so on and then have an argument about it.

I have to own up to playing this game myself and I have noticed that when discussing alto players one obvious candidate for top honours just doesn't seem to get a mention these days. I speak of Benny Carter.

Around 1952, Norman Granz recorded a *Jam Session* with a wonderful line-up that included the big-three of the alto at that time . . . Johnny Hodges, Charlie Parker and Benny Carter. The tunes that they played were 'What Is This Thing Called Love?', and the famous 'Funky Blues'.

All three define their style on that classic recording. However, although Parker and Hodges still have their legions of devotees, Benny Carter's place in that triumvirate seems to have been taken over by younger players such as Phil Woods. This seems a mistake, despite Woods' brilliance, for not only was Benny Carter the first great alto soloist, just as Coleman Hawkins was the first founding father of tenor-playing, but in addition, although a Hodges ballad is unsurpassable and a Parker blues or bebop solo remains the yardstick by which all following sax-players must be measured, it has become increasingly apparent to me that as the all-round master of the instrument, Benny Carter is tops.

His tone, not always well captured on record, is smooth, rich and 'legitimate', in other words not dissimilar to the tone produced by the great classical saxophonists. His solos are constructed from melodic fragments which are worked through the harmonic changes with wit, ingenuity and total sophistication, again a method not unlike that employed by classical composers. The end result is an effortless elegance that often belies the underlying complexity. In short, like all masters he makes it all look (or in this case sound) easy.

Bennett Lester Carter was born in New York on 8 August, 1907. His parents were both musical, though by no means professional, but there were musicians in the family. His first cousin, for instance, was Cuban Bennett, a very fine trumpet-player, much admired by his contemporaries, who sadly doesn't seem to have recorded at all. Then there was a family

connection with violin and clarinet-player, Darnell Howard.

It was, however, a neighbour a little older than Benny that proved his first inspiration. This was the great Bubber Miley, so it was a second-hand trumpet that the fourteen-year-old Benny Carter first acquired. However, he had also been listening to jazz records and was most impressed, alongside so many musicians of the Twenties and Thirties, with the playing of Frankie Trumbauer. Having been informed that the saxophone was easier than the trumpet, he swapped his trumpet for a C-melody saxophone almost immediately.

He must have progressed quickly, for within a couple of years he was working in a trio led by Willie 'The Lion' Smith and by the time he was seventeen he had switched to alto and was playing with musicians like the trumpeter June Clark and the great Earl Hines.

The year 1925 was important for Benny Carter. Living on campus of Wilberforce University near Columbus, Ohio, he was the only non-student member of a very fine college orchestra led by Horace Henderson, the Henderson Collegians. Such must have been his progress that when Henderson had to quit, it was the young Benny Carter that was elected leader.

By this time he was beginning to add arranging to his other talents but the band soon broke up and there followed a series of casual jobs, among which was a fortnight with another up-and-coming bandleader called Duke Ellington. How this intriguing combination might have developed we'll never know, but more often Benny found himself involved with Fletcher Henderson, Horace's elder brother, and seemed to make a habit of replacing a musician of similar talents to himself – Don Redman, most notably, as musical director and multi-instrumentalist in the renowned McKinney's Cotton-pickers.

By now, it was 1931. He was no longer a talented apprentice. His arranging was already in the highest class and such was his mastery of just about any instrument in the orchestra that it wasn't long before he earned his famous soubriquet, 'The Cat With Nine Lives'.

While with the Cottonpickers he was based in Detroit but he soon returned to New York and for the next three or four years was in high demand as a freelance musician and arranger. His arranging style was already well-defined. Unlike Ellington or even Redman, who were exploring the possibilities of mixing the various tonal colours of the orchestral pallette, the Carter sound, based on a light, springy rhythm section, used the various sections in contrast to one another, almost like solo instruments.

His saxophone writing in particular stands out in sparkling brilliance. Even today it sounds exceptional, coming across as if he himself were improvising one of his typical solos on an instrument that had somehow split itself into four or five voices, tightly harmonised.

No wonder that many of the top bands of the day were proud to include Carter arrangements in their book. No wonder either that when he put a band together to play at the Savoy Ballroom or to record, the musicians chosen regarded their inclusion as a sort of seal of approval that they were the best in the business. Mind you, they often were. Among his sidemen at this time were found drummers like Cozy Cole and Sid Catlett, the tenor-player Chu Berry and a young pianist called Teddy Wilson.

Like so many others, Carter was tempted to come to Europe, and in 1935 he came to Paris to work with Willie Lewis, but, after an enjoyable nine months or so including a stint in Cannes, he came to London through the auspices of Leonard Feather to work as staff-arranger for Henry Hall. While here, he also recorded with some of the best musicians of the day. What he could not do however, was to play professionally, since by this time the British and American Musicians' Unions were in dispute, so he made do with sitting in at late-night sessions at the Corner House or now forgotten clubs such as the Nest or the Shim-Sham.

It was at one of these sessions, or so the story goes, that he first encountered George Chisholm. So impressed was he that he wouldn't play.

'While he's up there playing,' he said, 'I'm listening!'

Certainly when he put together what was, I suppose, just about the first ever international big band, to play in Scheveningen in Holland, George was one of the first choices in a band that also included the fine and very underrated pianist Yorke de Souza.

However, the following year, 1938, found him back in New York and he plunged into the new competitive atmosphere of the 'Swing Era', and all that went with it. That he had no problem in re-entering the arena is shown clearly by the fact that when he put together another fine big band to indulge in band battles at the Savoy Ballroom, it was 'King' Carter that appeared on the posters.

This band didn't last for long, however. By 1942, with bebop beginning to take over, the Benny Carter Sextet at the Famous Door featured Dizzy Gillespie. Benny listened and learnt, (not that he had a great deal to learn), but he had the good sense not to jettison his established style. He simply absorbed the harmonic developments and, as always, the result was impeccable.

Throughout the war, he continued to play with various small groups, but by 1945 he had discovered California and decided to move to Los Angeles, where he has lived ever since.

He appeared in a few films and recorded with a variety of groups. One of the resulting performances is a gem of a track defining the very best of late Swing. Together with Benny's alto the group features Bill Coleman (trumpet), Buster Bailey (clarinet), Coleman Hawkins (tenor) and the rhythm section included a young pianist called Nat Cole. 'Riffamarole' ought to be put alongside 'West End Blues' and 'Body and Soul' as a definitive recording.

However as Benny became more and more involved in writing for films and TV, his live performances became increasingly rare over the next twenty years or so, although he still performed reasonably often in the studio. In addition to the aforementioned 'Funky Blues' or an LP such as *Further Definitions* where he and Hawkins lock horns with the new stars of 1961, Charlie Rouse and Phil Woods, he occasionally appears to add one of those rich, languid obbligatos behind a vocalist. One session when he was depping for somebody else produced a Peggy Lee version of 'Love, You Didn't Do Right By Me', a record that would always be on my desert island as much for Benny's playing as for Peggy's singing.

During this period he virtually abandoned his trumpet-playing, so how lucky for my generation that during the Seventies, while still busy as an arranger (you even find his name on Maria Muldaur LPs!), he decided to return to live work, picked up his trumpet again and, with the Pablo LP *The King* to help relaunch his career, soon reclaimed his spot as one of the brightest stars in the jazz firmament.

And I was luckier than most, for in 1976 I met him in New York through a mutual friend who was also visiting from London. The first impression is of a man as sophisticated and posed as his music. He really is the way one would hope one's hero to be. He knows his worth and wears that knowledge comfortably and with dignity.

He is still enthusiastic about music and always encourages others, although that very encouragement can come in an awesome manner. That first meeting, while he was getting up to date with his old friend over coffee in the kitchen of the New York flat where we all were, I was passing the time running through a piano piece that I was writing as part of a suite dedicated to Duke Ellington. A half an hour later when he came into the lounge where I was playing, he said 'What was that piece that you were playing? I don't think I know that one'. He proceeded to sit at the piano and play it through virtually note-perfect!

He visited Great Britain twice in the mid-Seventies, once depping for the already ailing Barney Bigard. Backed by a rhythm section of Duke Burrell (piano), Red Callender (bass), and Cozy Cole (drums) his version of 'All Of Me' will stay with me for a long time to come. Strangely, this performance was given in a ballroom in Purley of all places (!), but I believe it was recorded and I hope that it becomes generally available at some time. Later, he did a stint at the Pizza Express, Dean St, where he was magnificent, though Ralph Sutton and our own

. . . continues on page 56▶

VAL WILMER

ON THE RECORD | CHARLY R & B: GOOD TIMES ON THE STREET



'LACE UP your boots, Jack, roll up your silk socks. Put on your peg pants, long coat and high top, hook up your chain, pull out your cane, and "Hit the block" '.

Joe Lutcher's invitation to good times out on the street conjures up a different, perhaps wholly imaginary but powerfully attractive world of high living through good music.

Recorded in the Forties, Joe's vision still strikes a chord with generations of European fans light years removed from black Los Angeles in 1947. The musical sensibilities of these European fans are subject to continual overhaul, thanks to a barrage of reissued records from the specialist labels.

Black popular music of the Forties, Fifties and Sixties has never been as widely available as it is now – probably not even at the time it was being recorded. A host of reissue labels in this country, in Europe and Japan (and, to a lesser extent, in the States) has made available and is still making available, a range of 'oldies' – be they blues, r&b, soul or some hybrid – on an unprecendented scale. Some of the labels (Clankalanka stands out, if only because of the name) exist to issue one LP and then disappear, mission accomplished. Others, like Krazy Kat, Edsel, Ace have long-term reissue programmes calculated to bankrupt even the choosiest collector.

Perhaps the busiest of the reissue merchants is Charly, founded in France in 1974. A year later, a London office opened and now there's even a branch in Los Angeles. The multinational small label.

Charly's first coup was a leasing deal signed with Shelby Singleton, a white entrepreneur who had made waves in America's Southern musical scene for over a decade. Singleton had his own labels (SSS International, Silver Fox, Plantation); and, most important, he had also bought Sam Phillips' Sun Records catalogue – a vast repository of blues, r&b, country and rockabilly. Access to the Sun catalogue gave Charly its strongest identity, especially in the field of white rock & roll

Sun is by no means the only important label leased to Charly: Louisiana-based Goldband provides a treasure trove of cajun, swamp-pop, Southern r&b and rockabilly. Six anthologies of Goldband rock & roll, mostly but not exclusively white, have just appeared, as well as Guitar Junior's r&b collection *The Crawl*. Another half-dozen or so anthologies are in preparation

Other labels signed include the Jewel/Paula/Ronn group, recently fallen on hard times in the States; and the Chicago label Vee Jay, established in 1953 but defunct by 1966. Founded by Vivian Carter (one of the few black women record executives) and Jimmy Bracken, Vee Jay was a rival throughout the Fifties to Atlantic and Chess as the biggest and best purveyor of black music: r&b, blues, doo-wop and gospel. Charly have so far neglected the gospel catalogue which includes the Swan's Silvertones and the Staple Singers; soon to be rectified in the light of a growing interest in black religious music.

A deal recently signed with Gusto Records in the States has made available the King/Federal catalogue (James Brown's tracks excepted) – one more huge compendium of fine music, black and white. A first batch of twelve King/Federal LPs is in preparation, all by black artists: Wynonie Harris, Little Esther Phillips, the 5 Royales and Little Willie John amongst them. Gusto's concern about what happens to King in Europe has led them to stipulate that Charly must have the records mastered and pressed in the States – a bizarre irritant, if not a serious problem.

One further source of musical fodder has been 'major' labels willing to lease individual sections of their back catalogue to a small company with a better idea of how to handle it. In this way, Charly has acquired tracks from MCA (who own the Duke/Peacock labels, amongst others), EMI (Capitol, in particular) and WEA (ten LPs by individual artists from Atlantic have recently appeared). In general, the arrangement works well for both parties, not to mention the buyer. Occasional hiccups occur – American Atlantic had difficulty locating a tape by Otis Redding, of all people; and some majors are not prepared to let anything out of their hands. (On one occasion, Charly has even played the part of magnanimous major, leasing four unissued alternative takes by Jerry Lee Lewis to the JLL fan club for a limited edition EP.)

With such an enormous spectrum of music to choose from, it's impossible to cover Charly's entire r&b range: their illustrated brochure runs to over 200 LPs on Charly. This personal selection of some of the highlights tends to ignore the low spots.

Largely thanks to the Vee Jay connection, the Charly list is weighted heavily in favour of Chicago blues and none better than Elmore James, with two LPs: *One Way Out* and *Got To Move*, not all from Vee Jay and not all recorded in Chicago They show off James' straining, impassioned voice, supported by his piercing guitar, usually played in the bottleneck style.

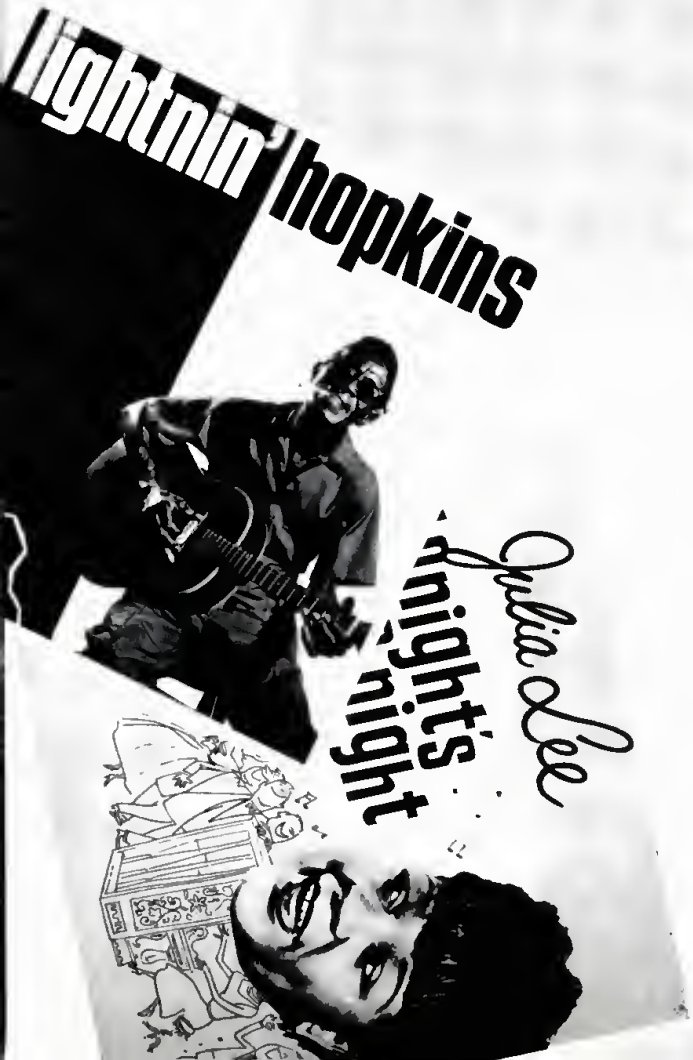
One Way Out is intended as a beginner's guide to Elmore and can't be faulted on that score. His first record and eventual theme song, 'Dust My Broom', is included but I've always preferred the later cuts, like the ones on *Got To Move*.

Favourite tracks on *One Way Out* are 'The Sky Is Crying' ('. . . look at the tears roll down the streets'), with shimmering bottleneck guitar summoning up almost unbearable emotion; and 'Twelve Year Old Boy', on which Elmore forgoes the bottleneck, turns his guitar amplifier full up and bellows out his complaint: 'I feel bad, I feel terrible, I'm just as sad as I can be – I let a boy twelve years old take my baby away from me'.

Although it's hardly representative, I'd choose 'Elmore's Contribution to Jazz' as best track on *Got To Move*: a manic, overheated instrumental, it has little to do with jazz, everything to do with blues as party music. Like Muddy Waters, James provided a link between the Chicago scene of the Fifties, and pre-war Delta blues but he was no anachronism, frozen out of place. Even if many of his records were simple echoes of his original 'Dust My Broom' hit, plenty of others showed an inventive, tuneful singer and guitarist whose passionate music reached a pitch seldom equalled, not in blues nor in *any* other form.

Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker are better known than Elmore. Reed worked for Vee Jay for twelve years, 1953–65, and was their most successful bluesman by far. His slurred, nasal voice, minimal guitar and squeaky harmonica were never virtuoso instruments but he had dozens of imitators – particularly in Louisiana, where imitating Reed was almost a way of life.

His distinctive style even brought him pop success – a dozen Top 100 hits in the States between 1957 and 1963 was no mean achievement for a singer so deeply rooted in the blues. Reed's life-long companion Eddie Taylor was his regular sideman on guitar and bass and often provided the cohesion needed when Jimmy's own talents threatened to spread in all directions – alcohol was a serious problem.



Charly has three Reed albums: *Upside Your Head* contains some of the biggest hits, including 'Shame Shame Shame' and 'Big Boss Man', both endlessly covered by British blues bands from the Sixties onwards. *High and Lonesome* has fewer hits but is the better record, displaying the strength of the Reed formula as well as some variations on the theme. *You Got Me Dizzy* is more for Reed collectors, containing obscure B-sides and LP tracks. An instrumental, 'Odds and Ends', is one of the strangest, most compelling records ever recorded in Chicago: every part of the formula works to perfection, especially Taylor's thundering bass, but the whole is transformed by wonderfully flowing *violin*, plucked and bowed, making a completely original contribution to blues history. That track alone makes the LP worthwhile for Reed fans; the unconverted will do better with *High and Lonesome*.

John Lee Hooker's career with Vee Jay lasted from 1955–64 although, typically, he worked with several other labels during that period. One of the most recorded post-war bluesmen, Hooker at his best made powerful use of his moody voice, fierce, percussive guitar and idiosyncratic timing. At Vee Jay he usually recorded with a small group (occasionally including Jimmy Reed and Eddie Taylor) which often smoothed away the rough edges of his style, leaving us with merely good, competent blues.

Of Hooker's four Charly LPs, only *This is Hip* and *Solid Sender* really work; the former includes pop hits like 'Boom Boom' and 'Dimples', alongside the tougher 'Crawling King Snake' and 'I'm In The Mood'. *Solid Sender* consists of twelve tracks from a single session (making up an almost-concept LP originally called *Travellin'*), fleshed out with two tracks from the beginning and two from the end, of Hooker's Vee Jay period. 'Hobo Blues' is particularly strong, while the heavily amplified guitar on the title track comes close to his best. His guitar on 'Sunny Land' resembles the gospel guitar of one-time Vee Jay label-mate Roebuck Staple, while 'I Can't Believe' finds Hooker solo and in good form.

The Vee Jay blues catalogue is also represented by good records from Billy Boy Arnold (who often worked with Bo Diddley) and Memphis Slim whose *Rockin' The Blues* is probably his only worthwhile LP. There are also three volumes of *Chicago Bluesmasters*, concentrating on lesser-known but at least equally good bluesmen: J.B. Hutto, Big Boy Spires, Floyd Jones. The chance to hear these tracks in pristine condition is a blues fan's dream come true; for the most part, Charly hasn't worried too much about collectors first and foremost but the *Bluesmasters* series satisfies even the strictest collectors' criteria.

Away from Vee Jay, and from Chicago, Texan T-Bone Walker has three Charly LPs (*T-Bone Jumps Again*, *Plain Ole Blues*, *The Natural Blues*), all leased from Capitol. Walker was one of the first – probably *the* first – electric blues guitarist. His open, clear sound was well matched by his worldly, unforced voice. These LPs all date from the late Forties and often show him in a near-jazz setting, particularly on the jump tunes. This places Walker at quite a distance from the Chicago sound, with its doomier overtones, but he could be just as moving, both on slow and fast songs. His Capitol records (not actually recorded by Capitol but purchased from smaller labels – and now they've travelled full circle) were matched only by his Imperial sides, not yet available in this country.

Lowell Fulson is one of many guitarists who drew his inspiration from T-Bone; he began recording on the West Coast in 1946 and, for over twenty years, was one of the most consistent and popular bluesmen. Then, in 1968, he signed up with Stan Lewis' Jewel label in Shreveport, Lousiana, and proceeded to record an album at Muscle Shoals, the home of country-soul. The results came close to rock music which annoyed many of his long-time fans but I've always enjoyed these tracks – the more outrageous, the better. His version of the Beatles' 'Why Don't We Do It In The Road?', with its monstrous beat, is played with such conviction it's difficult not to enjoy it, even if with a wry smile. Most of the tracks from the Muscle Shoals session, including 'Road', are on Lowell's *Man of Motion* LP, alongside more orthodox Fulsonisms from other sessions, for balance. While no-one would claim this is Fulson's



best, it's nevertheless good fun.

Passing mention must be made of Roscoe Gordon, whose rolling piano and boozy voice made him a particular favourite with Jamaican blues fans; of his two Charly LPs, *The Legendary Sun Performer* is best. Recorded between 1951–57, with Sam Phillips at the controls, the tracks show Roscoe's limited but winning talents with a variety of small groups, usually including a hard sax-player or two.

Johnny Otis – white, of Greek extraction – was a vital part of the black music scene throughout the Fifties. Many fine singers and musicians passed through his touring show, most notably Little Esther. The tracks on the Johnny Otis Show's *Rock'n'Roll Revue* date from the late Fifties and show Johnny and his ensemble striving for a light pop style, one which might appeal to white audiences as well as black. Titles like 'Crazy Country Hop' and 'Mumblin' Mosie' catch the mood. R&b was always close to rock & roll and the album is mostly good-time music, too frivolous for some tastes, but not for mine. 'Castin' My Spell' is a particularly good track, whose unusual rhythm completely transcends musical boundaries.

Louis Jordan influenced countless performers who were to become better known, from Chuck Berry to Bill Haley onwards. An enormously prolific recording star for over 35 years, from 1938 almost until his death in 1975, Jordan was witty and effervescent. His small band jump blues were long ignored by white fans because they fell between all possible stools: not quite jazz, nor blues, almost r&b, they defied pigeon-holing. But, over the past ten years, the importance of his music, not to mention the sheer pleasure of it, has slowly become apparent, there are now over a dozen albums available from various stages of his career. Although concentrating on generally little-known tracks, *Look Out!* is as good as any. This starts with his 1939 recording of 'Keep a Knockin' ', obviously part of Little Richard's heritage, and continues through to 1953 and 'House Party' whose boundless good fun can't be resisted: 'Hey, everybody! I'm crashing this party – everything's got to rock! Fix me a drink, it's gotta be rye, I wanna big water glass, I want to get high – I am balling tonight, cos tomorrow I may be gone.' Jordan's urbane good humour and rocking alto sax are perfect vehicles for the sophisticated wit of 'You Run Your Mouth (& I'll Run My Business)' and 'Look Out!'.

If ever there was a female Louis Jordan, it was Julia Lee. Buxom and bawdy, she made it clear she was just as keen for the party-life. *Tonight's the Night* collects some of her best Capitol tracks, recorded 1944–52. Playing boisterous piano on most of them (some feature Jay McShann), she conjures up the same hedonism as Jordan. If there is one fault here, it's the relentless double entendres, the painful nudge in the ribs from 'All This Beef and Big Ripe Tomatoes', 'I Didn't Like It the First Time'. But, musically, the LP will win you over and rescues an infectious talent from obscurity.

Fans of this sort of boogie-blues will enjoy Joe Lutcher's *Joe Joe Jump*. Lutcher's Jump Band was dominated by saxes and, occasionally, unassuming vocals; the sixteen tracks here were recorded over just three months in 1947 and, perhaps not surprisingly under that circumstance, there isn't a great deal of variation. But it would be difficult to complain about titles like 'Bagdad Bebop' and 'Sauterne Special'.

At their best, the vocal group ballads of the Fifties conjure up an authentic vision of teen romance, peculiarly unaffected by the harder realities of the blues. The doo-wop which suits European audiences best is the jump'n'boogie of the Eldorados 'Boom Diddie Boom' (from *Bim Bam Boom*) or the Spaniels' 'Sister Lizzie' (from *Great Googley Moo!*). Learn to enjoy these tracks and you'll eventually come to appreciate the slower classics, like the Spaniels' 'Goodnight Sweetheart', or the Five Keys' 'The Glory of Love' (from *It's a Groove*). The Keys were one of the best doo-wop groups, their LP divides into the generally rougher sound of their Aladdin sides (1951–53) and the slicker Capitol cuts (1954–56). On the way, they highlight the unusual song-writing talents of Rudolph Toombs, an unwritten giant of Fifties' r&b, responsible for some of the era's wittiest, most caustic songs. He was particularly astute on boozing, as the Five Keys show on 'Serve Another Round': 'Rock and rolling, all night long, drinking whisky till it's dawn – baby's waiting, got to go, pop the champagne, let it flow'.

It's a Groove is the best of the Charly one-group compilations but new listeners would do well to try *Jump Children* first. Here you get three of the best groups, including the Orioles, one of the first groups to evolve the style in the late Forties. The tracks here are from the mid-Fifties; also included are the Flamingos and the Moonglows who both went on to greater success, and a measure of film-stardom, with Chess Records. As the title suggests, the album concentrates on dance tracks but there are some pleadingly emotional ballads, too, like the Orioles' 'Happy Till The Letter'.

Emotion is the key to soul music, too, and some of Charly's best LPs cover the gospel-based Sixties' sounds which, in one move, swept aside most blues, r&b *and* doo-wop. Bobby 'Blue' Bland was, and still is, one of the toughest soul singers, having started singing r&b in the early Fifties. His album *Fooling With the Blues* covers his career with Duke Records from 1957–67 and sees his blues mannerisms gradually absorbing a hoarse, gospelly scream, eventually his trademark. 'Cry Cry Cry' and 'Touch of the Blues' are emotional *tours de force*, Bobby's shouting neatly complemented by succinct arrangements.

O.V. Wright was less of a shouter, his style was almost pure gospel – he began his career singing in gospel quartets and it shows. He made most of his records for Back Beat, a Duke subsidiary. The tracks on *Gone for Good* date from 1965–73, precisely the period when Bland's career was on the wane, but O.V. (it stands for Overton Vertis) never managed to step into Bobby's shoes, despite fine performances like the title track and 'You're Gonna Make Me Cry'. In the Seventies, his records were produced by Willie Mitchell who had phenomenal world-wide success with the records he made with Ann Peebles and, in particular, Al Green. Mitchell's easily identified production sound worked just as well, often better, for Wright, but lacking Green's charisma, O.V. Wright was destined to remain small-time.

There's no space here to cover the rest of Charly's soul/r&b releases, although there are equally good records available by Lightnin' Hopkins, Lee Dorsey, Howlin Wolf, Gene Chandler, Gatemouth Brown, Betty Harris, Ted Taylor, James Ray, Irma Thomas, Jay McShann and Walter Brown. And I haven't even touched the rockabilly/country boogie sections of the list, although one album in particular, *Boogie Woogie Fever*, has strong links with jump blues.

Charly is just part of an enormous growth in interest in what can only loosely be described as 'oldies'. All I can suggest is that you take the Flamingos' advice and 'Jump, children!'

Nick Kimberley

Charly Records are widely distributed to record shops and the company can be contacted at 156 Ilderton Road, London SE15 (01-732 5642)

ON THE RECORD II
PAUL MURPHY



THIS MAY come as a surprise but there's this new thing around called jazz and the kids are really into it!

Touch of the *déjà vu*'s ringing in the shell-likes there, perhaps? Well, ignore it; that's just the insistent sound of dancing feet moving to a music that has been lost to generations of youths for too long and is now, once again – and as it should be – *the* thing. Put out the bunting, sing 'Hallelujah' and, by the way, why haven't you told us about this before?

But that's enough of the questions, here are some of the answers. This may seem a little rash but this resurgence of interest in the music – and, particularly, dancing to the music – can very nearly be pinned down to one man. Paul Murphy has taken his 'Joe Average' (as he puts it) taste to the nightclub turntables and finds himself with as many journalists out for 'the next big thing' as punters tailing him from West End haunts all the way down to Brighton and then back up to Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow.

I spent a night at the Wag Club in London's Wardour Street recently – Paul's Monday-night hop – and there he told me the circumstances he feels have occurred to bring on this renaissance

'Firstly, the last year or so has seen a wealth of very accessible, very listenable re-released material become readily available. It seemed, before, that only avant-garde music was making the shelves and classic releases were only available through the unreliable secondhand market.

'Also, this club-going generation are dressing with a "cool" jazz-age influence and, naturally, as with the rockabilly or mod revivals, people get interested in soaking up the culture of the age. The fact that a lot of music is being released in its original sleeves helps in that respect.

'But the most fundamental reason is that this is the first time for ages that jazz has not been presented in a bastardised form. The only people who are really into "versions" or diluted music are the musicians themselves. There was a time when musicians were the trend-setters but they are hopelessly left behind now. Their whole image and ideals are wrong. Music became really pseudo and political. Most people don't care about all of that.

'Whenever the artists were seen performing on TV, which was its only real mass outlet, they looked sloppy and scruffy and just played to each other. They had no respect for their audience and so the people lost their respect in them.

'The only performer I can think of now who has any style is Tommy Chase.'

Now, you may or may not be best impressed with Mr Murphy's theories but I can only suggest that you take heed of them because if anyone is in the position to be in the know, it's him

Paul came up through the booming soul-music circuit of the mid/late-Seventies, a scene which introduced bods like myself and Murphy to a hybrid music now known as jazz-funk.

Around the tail end of 1979, he found himself a residency, at The Horseshoe, a pub in London's Tottenham Court Road. He started off playing the usual mixture of soul and disco but quickly decided that that was not where he was at. So Paul started leaning on the jazz and that was the beginning of the very rocky trail that has led him to his current status of 'the voice of the jazz youth'.

Here, incidentally, it's also worth mentioning a few generally

undocumented facts that Paul, himself, modestly plays down – his early, brave forays into the precarious world of promotion.

While at the Horseshoe, Paul single-handedly took an unprecedented risk (at least, *other* promoters thought so) of bringing over two notable 'jazz names', Alphonse Mouzon and the Heath Brothers, to play lengthy live sets at the club. This move was unheard of and was the ultimate in disco pa (personal appearance) where artists more usually just mime to their latest hit record.

Underestimating the enormous organisational and capital investment required for such one-off events, Paul lost money – his own – *but* his nerve won undying admiration and respect from a few sympathetic journalists, established promoters and a good few hundred happy punters.

Paul should also receive the credit (for imagination and foresight) in bringing a virtually unknown Tania Maria live to a wider audience (at Tottenham Court Road's YMCA studio) more than *two* years before the media (or festival promoters, for that matter) wanted to know about her.

I just thought I'd put the record straight . . .

Paul explained the problems he had, and no doubt will continue to have, in bringing jazz music to the masses.

'When I started dee-jaying, I had lots of ideas but I just couldn't get them straight in my head. And there was no-one who would tell me so I had to teach myself. The problem was that the "classic" sound was so unfashionable no-one would guide me in that direction.

'What I have tried to do is pinpoint a populist vein and get away from all the snobbery and invertedness attached to the music. I'm presenting it in a way the artists used to in its hey-day – entertainment as well as good music.'

This 'populist' aspect to which Paul refers also stretches as far as his in-depth knowledge of the music he is conveying.

'I can point anyone to a great Horace Silver track but if someone says to me "Wow, what about that chord, eh?", I can't tell them.'

Now, there may be a few people reading this who are narrow-minded enough to be able to get their heads between the gap in a pair of terraced houses but let us not forget the fundamental thing here: the music is getting played – it's getting played a lot and a lot of people are getting, well, well into it. Only a few insanely jealous and possessive terminal cases would ever deny these musicians the recognition their endeavours deserve and are currently getting. Why not let us all enjoy it while we can.

And, whilst on the subject of things terminal and getting it while the going is good, Paul remains casually philosophical about this current fad's durability.

'Life isn't like a film on three or four reels, it lasts as long as it lasts. You just keep on doing it, don't you?'

ON THE RECORD III

RECORDING IMPROVISED

MANY IMPROVISERS, non-improvisers and anti-inprovisers alike continue to question, in print, the recording of improvised music.

There have only been a few exceptions who have appreciated the intrinsic necessity of recording improvised music, such as Jean Dubuffet ('It is impossible to write true music, except with a stylus on the wax, and this is what they do now in recordings') and Leo Smith ('In our times now, an oral-electronic tradition is being born, and this signifies the age of a new improvisation-art-music-form'). Fortunately, most improvisers have ignored their doubts expressed in print, and have gone ahead and recorded their music.

In the past, great improvisers (the likes of Bach, Beethoven and Chopin) had to resort to notation as the only way to preserve their music. Those that did not do so have been reduced to a footnote in someone's memoires (if they are that lucky). The advent of recorded sound has meant that great improvisers can now preserve their music directly without having to resort to the vagaries of notation. The advent of recorded sound has also meant that the notation of music has become largely superfluous. (The advent of the player-piano and electronic sound sources has also reduced the need of would-be composers to use notation and treat musicians as fodder.)

Thus, recordings and improvisation are entirely symbiotic, as if they were invented for each other (although Edison, among others, does not seem to have appreciated this). Also, since pre-composed music is preserved (albeit imperfectly) as a score, it is much more important to record improvised music (which is otherwise unpreserved) than pre-composed music.

(It does seem particularly pointless to re-record continually the same pieces of pre-composed music, especially when there is so much music waiting to be made, and when most of the published performances are mediocre or worse. For example, the Thirties recordings by Artur Schnabel of the Beethoven piano sonatas and concertos have rendered all subsequent recordings of these works as a complete waste of time and resources – hopefully it will soon be possible to make the sound of these old recordings fuller using computer technology.)

Objection has been raised that a sound recording cannot contain many of the factors that influence improvised music, such as the acoustics, the audience (if any), the relationships (if any) between the performers, the weather, the economic climate, the contents of breakfast (if any), etc etc. This is entirely true. But it is doubly true of pre-composed music since similar sets of factors influence both the composition and the interpretation of the music.

Then again, members of an audience at a concert do normally

However, one thing that would annoy Paul if it helped to nip it in the bud is the trendy media's preoccupation with the specialised (ie impossible for mere mortals) form of jazz-dance that utilises extremely quick Latin and bebop rhythms to make sure a dance-floor is only occupied by the gifted few. This form of tap for the Eighties makes the breakers and body-poppers look like a group of sedate barn dancers and could easily take the music away from punters and into the lofty heights of performance art.

Paul has become well aware of this and specifically avoids all-out '100 mph stuff' and mixes up the moods and tempos to suit all people. As he says, 'The media going ape about that jazz-dance could easily have killed it. The music became almost incidental. There is, of course, no denying that these dancers are special but they reflected a scene that is, perhaps, only thirty people and that is leading everyone up a blind alley'.

And it's not only the nation's enthusiasts who are extolling Paul's virtues, even the record industry is putting the big bucks where its mouth is. Paul, along with his partner Dean Hulme, started off the Palladin record label from their basement record bar in Soho's Berwick Street. Their initial investment of faith has been in such bands as Paz, Onward Internationals and Working Week. Palladin has now been picked up and invested in by Virgin Records, the sort of company not too slow in spotting what's moving their market around the tiles. So now Paul Murphy has gone 'ligit' for his nine–to–five activities but this will not stop him putting himself around the night clubs and playing the music he's mad keen on to mad keen audiences. As far as he is concerned, jazz is a music for the people and he wants to make damn sure they get to hear it.

'You don't have to be a buff,' he told me as the opening strains of Duke Pearson's 'Jeannine' inspired the mixed throng in attendance to dispose of their beverages and take to the floor. 'You don't even have to be into it. Just come along and try it – after all, it is your music.'

Mark Webster

PAUL MURPHY'S STREET-WISE CLUB CHART

- 1. **Dinah Washington:** Swingin' Miss D (Phonogram)
- 2. **Horace Silver:** Song For My Father (Blue Note)
- 3. **Slim Gaillard:** Opera In Vout (Verve)
- 4. **Art Blakey:** Drum Suite (CBS)
- 5. **Conexion Latino:** Calorcito (Enja)
- 6. **Wes Montgomery:** Full House (Prestige/RCA)
- 7. **Coleman Hawkins:** Soul (Prestige/RCA)
- 8. **Oliver Nelson:** More Blues & the Abstract Truth (Jasmine)
- 9. **Tito Puente:** El Rey (Concord)
- 10. **Art Farmer:** Mau Mau (OJC)

MUSIC

not know all the factors influencing the music being performed, so they are not much better off than listerners to recordings. (This could be an argument against both the performance and recording of music, in line with the *Candid Camera* silent pianist who claimed that the sound of the music distracted from the music itself.)

The problem of what to publish on records then arises. Should it be representative or just the best? Should it be as realistic as possible or the creation of something that cannot exist outside of a sound recording?

Ideally, every music performance should be recorded and the recording published in toto. This would give the listener a true perspective (especially if a list of the prevailing extra-musical influencing factors were also included). Unfortunately (fortunately?) no-one has the resources (energy and/or multi-processing capability) or freedom (time and/or money) to deal with all this.

Hard and fast rules are impossible. Reality is generally preferred by this listener, but a few 'artificial' creations (usually involving overdubbing) have been enjoyed. Complete performances are more satisfying theoretically, since they get the listener closer to being at the concert, but many performances unfortunately contain both good and bad bits. This record buyer begrudges paying for the bad bits and does not have the time and desire to sit through them repeatedly (unless they are bad enough to be perversely enjoyable). Certainly, it makes little sense to publish anything that does not make any sense as music divorced from its immediate environment (such as a performer losing his temper with an obnoxious member of the audience).

The choice of material to be published is also restricted by the form of the media, ie, two lots of about three minutes on 78s, two lots of about twenty minutes on LPs, one lot of about sixty minutes on compact discs, etc. The recording editor, normally (hopefully) the musician(s) involved, thus become a composer who has to fill certain allotments of time with amounts of pre-recorded music that may or may not have started out as improvised.

But then, the act of improvising itself is filling time (either a predetermined or open-ended amount) with music – something that could be called real-time composition, and something that has more need and more right to be recorded than anything else.

Martin Davidson

FOREIGN SONGS

THE 'MODERN MUSIC' OF MEREDITH MONK



LOIS GREENFIELD

The palm at the end of the mind
Beyond the last thought, rises
In the bronze distance.
A gold-feathered bird
Sings in the palm, without human feeling,
Without human meaning, a foreign song.
WALLACE STEVENS

MUCH OF the thrust of modern music – of modernism in the arts generally – has been in the direction of Wallace Stevens' poem: an attempt to get beyond the fixities and limitations of artistic forms and to find a point where artist and audience might experience the imagination directly and without mediation.

'Works' became secondary to 'work'. The interest shifted from the end product to the process that brought it about (almost as if 'music' and 'poetry' were to change value, becoming verbs rather than nouns). Music became governed by two opposing principles: chance, which removed all need for decision-making, and a rigid determinism which meant that the music was governed absolutely (and with no spiritual or emotional or narrative spillage) by a structural principle. In seeking purity, modernism too often achieved dullness. By making structure the be-all and end-all, artists surrendered to their own critics; music became desiccated and elitist. In trying to get rid of 'repressive' properties like conventional form, ideology, national characteristics, expressiveness, personality, all the apparatus of humanism, the modernist critics failed to fish the baby out of the bathwater. Music got thrown out in the process of chucking away the unmusical.

So goes the pessimistic anti-modernist run-down. Actuality never reads quite as neatly and the reaction from modernist principles tends to confuse the theories of critics (which tend to be dogmatic) with the actual achievements of artists (which always resist both theory and generalisation). There was nothing inhumane about Schoenberg or Webern or Cage. Yet there was a tendency (turned into a law by the critics), detectable in the shift from one to the other to the third, to make music an increasingly pure thing-in-itself, untainted by contact with any of the other arts or with the world at large.

If music is the most formal, the purest, of the arts, then literary language is the least. What makes Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* (or Schoenberg's *Second String Quartet*) so sublime is the combination of the one with the other. Ultimately, only words (and someone else's words) could express the sense of

joy or mystery that the composer sought. Across the gap between form and meaning, they were able to achieve a grasp of both musical and literary values that would have been impossible without the coming together of languages, musical and verbal, pure sound and fixed meaning.

The problem with Meredith Monk is that she belongs to no artistic pigeon-hole. Indeed, if her work has a single direction it is towards the proof that there are no arts, only art, and that the distinction between means is a spurious one. Which leaves the problem, one common to all innovative artists, that there are no terms available to criticism which are larger than those she creates in the work itself.

Monk's range of abilities makes the average Hollywood 'hyphenate' seem absurdly specialised. She has been a dancer, choreographer, singer, pianist, composer, film-maker and performance artist, working both solo and with multi-media groups like The House. The mistake is to see these as separate interests and achievements. They are not. All Monk's work has been of a piece.

It remains appallingly difficult to describe. Sadly, those who have taken the trouble have tended to be her detractors rather than her supporters. The best way of putting down anything new or original is to describe it 'literally' and locally without any attempt to explain the whole or the intention behind. Irving Wardle of *The Times* delightedly transcribed 'nana nizzinizzi nezod nene KNORR' from *Education of the Girlchild* in order to demonstrate the rather sour point that 'the penalty of breaking down artistic specialisation is that nobody knows how to perform'.

All of which rather suggests that there is a right and a wrong way. Monk's work has all been concerned with breaking down this prejudice and – like fellow-composers Robert Ashley and Philip Glass – with re-establishing the connections between music and language, implicitly between the human and the non-human, that natural world we cannot control and which earlier composers like Cage were happy merely to transcribe. 'I have no contempt for the word', Meredith Monk has said, 'except as glue'.

There is, I'd argue, a strong adhesive linking her work, one that partakes quite happily of language. It runs through most of her output, from pieces like *Dolmen Music, Education of the Girlchild* and *Key* to her films and other performances. Philip Glass has been able to work within a carefully revised and updated tradition – that of opera – to open out the constituency of music and to restore the values of freedom and individuality that emerge in his *Einstein on the Beach* and *Satyagraha*. Monk, though, is offering a feminist critique of that very tradition, though she and Glass share many ideals in common, Monk has to work with a blank sheet.

The sequence *Education of the Girlchild*, like so many of her works, has been attacked as a mere assemblage of vocal effects – glottal stops, microtonal glides and syllables not used in 'natural' language. It is, however, a perfect instance of content being used to subvert form, spontaneously improvised 'language' being used to undermine all our fixed ways of ordering experience and expressing feeling. Monk works in opposition to all those fixities which – in the arts as in everything else – are dominated by male, western and intellectual values. Her songs are foreign and beyond thought in the rational sense, derived if from any source from Eastern and Amerindian music. Their power comes from the illusion, especially successful in the group piece *Dolmen Music*, that real communication at a linguistic level is taking place between the performers.

Monk has described the effect as both 'ancient and futuristic' and it does create the impression of simian primitiveness simultaneous with great cultural advance. The performers use no recognisable semantic language but they are communicating in a far more literal way than symphonic players working from a written score or jazz musicians working within the conventions of harmonic order. Meredith Monk is able to prove that music is a language and she does so without any ideological or mystical flag-waving, without either the philosophical systems Philip Glass introduces or the more conventional narrative basis of a work like Robert Ashley's *Perfect Lives (Private Parts)*.

Lives are rarely perfect and privacy itself has become a threatened value. There has been very little attempt to retrieve a political or social message from Meredith Monk's work, and in many ways this is the key both to her importance and to her relatively low critical standing. Though she is routinely seen as a technical purist, she has shown a consistent concern with the fate of the individual in the mass – the single voice in the group – and with the nature of selfhood set against history. In examining such themes, her films are perhaps the most fruitful source. In no way are these incidental or separate elements in her developoment, nor do they follow a different imaginative logic from her music. They are simply rather more directly accessible and interpretable. Meredith Monk has spoken of the 'musicality of images'; her films are dramatic in that purest sense, never discursive.

A short early work concentrates on the body, her own. The soundtrack is a text by the radical psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, describing the ecstatic movements associated with orgasm. Monk's movements on camera by contrast, are constrained and cramped, even stylised. The piece represents a powerful critique of 'male', even radical male, values and, by extension, the divide between theories like Reich's and actual lives.

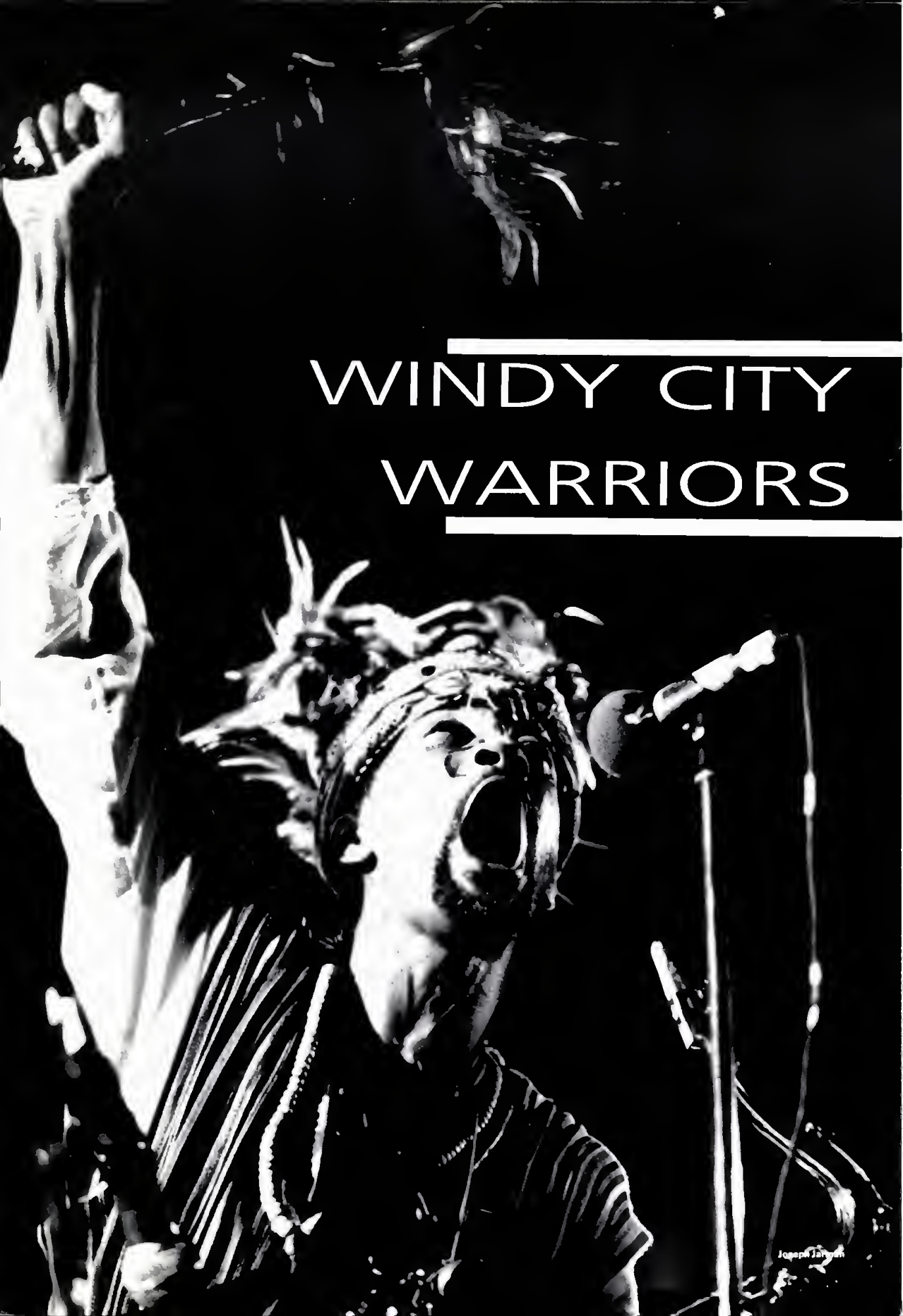
Perhaps Monk's best work to date is the film *Ellis Island* which enacts the arrival in America of European emigrants, their processing on the notorious island in New York harbour. Bodies are prodded, probed, examined, set alongside surveyors' metre-sticks, often absurdly out of scale. The human form is being made to conform to some alien standard. The emigrants are coached in the meaningless waffle of nationalist rhetoric.

Groups move in a stylised dance pattern across a dusty set, completely out of synch with a camera movement which Monk has called her 'security camera pan', the left-jerk-stop, right-

continues on page 54▶

Meredith Monk and Dolmen Music




WINDY CITY
WARRIORS

IT BEGINS with a fart.

Blood-red lights illuminate a golden forest of brass and bells. Fifty instruments arrayed in a semi-circle; rows of drums, racks of gongs, a shiny, luxuriant undergrowth of saxes, flutes, clarinets.

Five musicians step from the shadows: Roscoe Mitchell in street clothes, Lester Bowie in white lab coat, Famoudou Don Moye, Malachi Favors Maghostus and Joseph Jarman in African tribal costumes, their faces painted in mystical designs, and Jarman's head-dress adorned with gigantic plumes that arch from his scalp like antlers. Quickly the five men take up their positions, then turn to the side of the stage, heads bowed.

Silence.

Moments later, Jarman gently strikes a huge oriental gong



JAK KILBY

THE ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO blew out of America in the late Sixties with a new approach to music that revolutionised jazz.

Graham Lock breezes through their history, from the early days of onstage custard-pie fights to their current status as international stars, and speaks to founder-members LESTER BOWIE, MALACHI FAVORS and ROSCOE MITCHELL.

and a single percussive ripple spreads out through the auditorium.

Again, silence.

Then Lester Bowie swivels to the mike, fills his cheeks with air, puts trumpet to lips and blows a long, loud, gurgling, outrageous, unmistakable *fart*.

The Fart Ensemble of Chicago? So this is why they call it The Windy City?

'OH BABY/DONCHA WANNA GO/BACK TO THE LAND OF CALIFORNIA/TO MY SWEET HOME CHICAGO.'

ROBERT JOHNSON – 'SWEET HOME CHICAGO'.

IT BEGINS, really, in Chicago.

Al Capone's town. Steel mills, stockyards, slaughter-houses. This is Meat City USA, famous for its butchers – from the machine-gunning hoods of Prohibition to more recent disrespecters of human flesh like Richard Daley and Hugh Hefner.

But Chicago is best known for its music, its *Great Black Music*. Here, in the Twenties, Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines forged the partnership that gave birth to modern jazz; and later, in the great Black migration movements of the Depression and post-war years, Chicago was the crucible in which raw delta music from the Mississippi was urbanised and amplified as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson transformed the blues into r&b and Fifties rock & roll.

A decade later jazz, too, was transformed in Chicago. Sun Ra's cosmic capers sowed the seeds, but in 1960 he and the Arkestra moved to New York and Chicago's tiny avant-garde scene was left in the hands of two men, pianist Muhal Richard Abrams and young saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell.

In 1961, Abrams formed The Experimental Band, a rehearsal group for the city's improvisers, and a few years later he helped start the AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), the most important and influential jazz organisation of the last twenty years. The AACM worked as a co-operative, with the ideal of serving the Black community. As well as organising festivals and concerts, they set up a school for young musicians and quickly established themselves as a social force: in a famous quote, Joseph Jarman (later a member of the Art Ensemble) testified to the value of the AACM – 'Until I had the first meeting with Richard Abrams, I was "like all the rest" of the "hip" ghetto niggers; I was cool, I took dope, I smoked pot etc. I did not *care* for the life I had been given'.

NICK WHITE

The AACM had a profound effect on jazz. Its success in Chicago inspired the start of similar groups all over the world, while its own members – players like Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill, Leo Smith, Leroy Jenkins – continue to have a vital impact on the evolution of the New Jazz. But the group which really established The Windy City as a centre for Great Black Music, the best-known and most popular of all the AACM outfits, was The Art Ensemble of Chicago.

'WHEN I LEFT ST LOUIS/YOU KNOW I WAS CHICAGO BOUND.'

JIMMY ROGERS – 'CHICAGO BOUND'.

IN A bare backstage dressing-room, straight after their Royal Festival Hall concert, I snatch twenty minutes with Art Ensemble trumpeter Lester Bowie.

Bowie was born in Frederick, Maryland, in 1941, but grew up in St Louis where, the story goes, he'd practise his trumpet by an open window in the hope that Louis Armstrong might pass by and discover him just as Satchmo himself had been discovered by Joe 'King' Oliver.

He went to Chicago in 1966 and soon became involved with the AACM where he met Roscoe Mitchell and joined his band. Where Abrams was the AACM's spiritual guide (to simplify wildly), Mitchell was its musical genius. *Sound* by The Roscoe Mitchell Sextet was the first LP of new Chicago jazz and it stands as the blueprint for the second wave of New Music which swept out of the city in the late Sixties to revolutionise jazz.[1]

I ask Lester Bowie, how come all this happened in *Chicago*?

Bowie, still high on the concert, is as flamboyant in speech and gesture as he is on trumpet.

'Because Chicago is, like' – he takes up a declamatory pose – 'The Centre Of Black America! You dig?

'Chicago is *strong*. Chicago is where the bad, slick muthaf****s is. I mean, *slick*.'

He laughs and waves his wine glass around.

'See, I was from St Louis and the whole dream wasn't to go to New York, it was Chicago, 'cause Chicago is where you could go *hustle*. People were always comin' back from there with *big* money!

'There was a *lot* of stuff happening there, man, like right now. Jesse Jackson, Elijah Mohammed, the AACM, now we got

Mayor Washington. That's a really great city, it is *the* American city. New York ain't, LA ain't, they're international places, ports, but Chicago is *America*.' He grins and sips his drink.

'See, Chicago was *founded* by a black cat. Du Sable was a Black explorer who started Chicago in the first place – 'n' it took us all this time to get the muthaf**** back!' He bursts out laughing. 'But now we *got* it.'

'THERE WAS PLENTY OF EMPTINESS, AS MUCH AS YOU NEEDED TO DEFINE YOURSELF AGAINST, AS AMERICAN SOULS SEEM TO DO.'

SAUL BELLOW ON CHICAGO — *THE DEAN'S DECEMBER*.

TO UNDERSTAND the shock of Roscoe Mitchell's music, you have to look at the state of jazz at the time.

In the early Sixties, the New Jazz flew thick and fast. New York was the eye of the hurricane and the dominant spirit was John Coltrane. His music, as the decade progressed, seemed like an ever-more urgent quest for spiritual ecstasy, approached, on an LP like *Ascension*, via dense wedges of freeform cacophony where players blew themselves frantic on the thin line between desperation and bliss.

This was a true high-energy music, pursued also in Albert Ayler's dervish alto cries and Cecil Taylor's molten lava piano: wailing, intense, claustrophobic, it crashed around you in mountainous waves, whisked you like a cork along its thunderous torrents.

Then, just when you wondered how jazz could go any further without smashing itself to pieces on these walls of febrile noise, Roscoe Mitchell – practically unknown outside his native Chicago – reasserted the elementary values of space and silence. His *Sound* and *Congliptious* LPs signalled a new attitude in the music: it stopped screaming and began to breathe. Sounds floated in and out of silence, cries and whispers would swell and fade in a complex ensemble dynamic. The track 'Little Suite' is a perfect example, described by Mitchell as 'a suite of colours' or moods, and summed up by Chicago writer J. B. Figi as 'a patchwork quilt of staggered statements, evershifting'.

To this cool kaleidoscope, Lester Bowie added his mercurial wit, a trumpetful of yelps and snarls, and bassist Malachi Favors provided a grounding place with a style that was fundamentally earthy, yet still one of the freest in jazz. These three – Mitchell, Bowie, Favors – played together on *Sound* and *Congliptious* and on Bowie's *Numbers 1 & 2*. This trio of LPs laid down the guidelines that not only inspired the Chicago revolution but still operate for the Art Ensemble today – like the use of 'little instruments' (whistles, shells, sirens, shakers, a whole percussive dada orchestra), the emphasis on the distortions and rude noises that can be coaxed from the instruments, and the gleeful ransacking of the tradition for snatches of blues, marches, waltzes, gospel, bebop, whatever!

This new Chicago music was calm, playful and spacious. It took a leisurely, affectionate stroll through history, emphasising the continuity of the Black tradition, so musicians need no longer react against previous jazz genres but could embrace a past that stretched back beyond New Orleans to Africa itself, the original source. This sense of pride and community, which co-existed in the Black political movements of the time, was later given voice in the Art Ensemble's famous slogan: 'Great Black Music – Ancient To The Future'.

The Art Ensemble itself came together in 1969 when saxophonist Joseph Jarman joined up with Mitchell, Bowie and Favors. Jarman, the ex-frontline soldier and 'hip ghetto nigger' who had once been into 'a violent concept of being', had been turned around by the AACM and by his studies in Buddhism. He had played bebop with Mitchell in college, and they had tried freeform together in The Experimental Band; but while Mitchell pursued his sound and space innovations, Jarman's group were investigating poetry and ambitious programme music like 'Non-Conitive Aspects Of The City' from their first LP *Song For*.

A second album, *As If It Were The Seasons*, followed but in the meantime the group's pianist Christopher Gaddy had died of heart disease, and a few months later bassist Charles Clark – one of the AACM's brightest young stars – died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of twenty-four. This double tragedy hit Jarman hard and, feeling unable to rebuild his own band, he agreed to join Mitchell, Bowie and Favors (as he had already done as a guest on Side Two of *Numbers 1 & 2*) and The Art Ensemble of Chicago was born.



Roscoe Mitchell

NICK WHITE

Jarman's style was less astringent than Mitchell's and he began to fill some of the band's spaces with warm, flowing lines that recalled his idol Eric Dolphy. He also brought his love of poetry, drama and spectacle (he once caused a sensation by appearing onstage wearing only his saxophone sling). Not that the others lacked a sense of theatre. writer John Litweiler[2] has described early gigs by Mitchell's group where an actor in a Lyndon Johnson mask would come onstage only to have the musicians pelt him with custard pies!

The new Art Ensemble had still to find a drummer – first choice Philip Watson who had played with Mitchell's bands in the mid-Sixties had joined the Butterfield Blues Band in order to make a living – yet, within a few months of Jarman joining, they took an enormous gamble with their future. The entire band shut up shop and moved to France in search of fame and fortune.

'TOUGH TIMES/TOUGH TIMES IS HERE ONCE MORE/IF YOU DON'T HAVE NO MONEY/YOU CAN'T LIVE HAPPY NO MORE.'

JOHN BRIM — *TOUGH TIMES*, CHICAGO 1953.

THE STORY goes that to pay for their fares across the Atlantic, the Art Ensemble had to sell practically everything they owned. Is that true?

'Yeah,' Lester Bowie nods. 'We sold everything. Not just for the fare, but so we could rent a house. We had a nice house.'

That sounds like a pretty drastic step. Why did you need to

go to France?

'It was part of, like, feeding yourself with your instrument. We decided in '69 that we just wanted to play *our* music. See, we'd been playing in different-type groups for years – like, I was with carnivals, with blues guys, with Joe Tex; Malachi was working in bars and out at the airport. We wanted to go to Europe and play our music.'

You couldn't do that in the States?

'No, man!' Bowie shakes his head decisively. 'There was no hope at all. Not of supporting ourselves on our music. I mean, we did gigs, released records, travelled all over – like, we used to go to California every year for three or four months. That's how we'd practise, we'd go and rehearse in the woods and the caves, all those beautiful places, eat grapefruit . . .,' he grins dreamily. 'Then we decided to come to Europe and do that *all* the time.'

It was the right move. Paris in 1969 was a haven for Black American musicians fleeing the racism of US society, and the jazz scene flourished.[3] During their eighteen-month stay, the Art Ensemble recorded twelve LPs and appeared, individually, on over twenty LPs by other expatriate luminaries like Archie Shepp and Sunny Murray.

They also found their drummer. New Yorker Don Moye had played in North Africa, in Italy with Steve Lacy, and was touring Europe when he met the Art Ensemble in Paris. His knowledge of African drumming and his huge array of percussion further filled in the Art Ensemble sound, and this adoption – with Jarman and Favors – of face-paint and African costumes made their concerts more of a spectacle than ever.

For a while, soul-singer Fontella Bass (then Mrs Bowie[4]) also joined their ranks, most successfully on the soundtrack album *Les Stances A Sophie*; and many of their French recordings – notably *People In Sorrow*, *Rees And The Smooth Ones* and *A Jackson In Your House* – still remain among the best Art Ensemble LPs. By the time they returned to the States at the end of 1971, the band had won themselves an international reputation.

Lester Bowie



NICK WHITE

In the ensuing thirteen years, they've become one of the most-travelled and popular of all jazz groups, filling concert halls the world over with a freewheeling music that, for all the spectacle and humour, they continue to evolve and explore on their own terms. They set up their own AECO record label in the mid-Seventies but they've also recorded for major labels like Atlantic and, most recently, ECM who released their latest epic, the superb live double *Urban Bushmen*, in 1982.

At the same time, each group member has pursued solo projects that cover an even wider range of musics than their group work. The particular strands of musical thought that come together in the Art Ensemble are here unravelled and explored in detail, and the characters of the individual musicians shown in bold relief: from the austere saxophone experiments of Roscoe Mitchell (he once began a concert by repeating the same musical phrase *sixty-six* times!) to the more populist escapades of Lester Bowie who has played Afrobeat with Fela Kuti, funk with Defunkt, gospel with From The Root To The Source and doo-wop trumpet on his own LP, *The Great Pretender*.

But how does this magpie collecting of styles fit in with Bowie's previous determination to play his *own* music?

'Aw, I like anything,' he remonstrates. 'I loved the carnivals and the blues bands, it's all part of the experience. But you have to keep *moving*. I mean, I like the blues now, I'll go back and play the blues tomorrow, but I didn't wanna be a blues *cat*. See, I'll play anything, I don't care. I played all the way through Mexico with little bands there, I played reggae in Jamaica for two years, I played in Africa.'

How did that African trip come about? I ask.

Bowie sets about his story with the relish of a true raconteur.

'I always wanted to go to Africa, you dig. So after one tour I just said, I'm *goin'* to Africa, so I took all my money 'n' bought me a one-way ticket to Lagos.'

Bowie arrived in town with 100 dollars. Fifty went on a hotel room for the night, ten more went on food. The next morning he woke up, not knowing a soul in the country and obliged to check out at noon.

'So I was talkin' to the cats and they said, hey, man, you oughta go see Fela. And Fela at that time, they'd just burned his house and beat him up pretty bad and threw his momma through the window, so he'd taken over this motel, see.'

Blowing his last cash on a taxi, Bowie rolled up in the motel courtyard clutching his trumpet case.

'This cat came up to me, you know, and looked at me, and he say, what *is* that? So I say, it's a trumpet. He say, you play *jazz*? I say, yeah, you know, a little bit. He say, well you must be *heavy* then. I say, well yeah, a little bit. He say, you come to the *right* place, man. I say, why's that? He say, 'cause we the *baddest* band in Africa.' Bowie bursts out laughing.

'But when Fela first met me, he got out his record player and one of those "Music Minus One" records, that's just got the rhythm section on it, 'cause he wanted to hear what I sounded like. So he fetched his saxophone and put on this record, and it was a blues in B-flat, which' – he smirks modestly – 'just happens to be my speciality. So after I finished playing Fela said, go get his bags, man, this cat's movin' in!

'I was a special guest of Fela's for three months. Had a really good time, too, and learned a lot of shit.' Bowie grins. 'After that, I got *good*.'

Bowie's African adventure is documented on a couple of Fela Kuti LPs (*Black President* on Arista, *Perambulator* on Lagos International Records). But his most ambitious project to date – the 1979 New York concert by his fifty-nine-piece Sho Nuff Orchestra – was not recorded.

Joseph Jarman's solo work, too, has been under-represented on disc. A number of fine LPs have appeared, often with Don Moye in attendance (*Black Palladins* and *Earth Passage – Density* on Black Saint and the *Egwu-Anwu* duo on India Navigation are recommended), but his large-scale orchestrations for extended groups have yet to be recorded. Until this is rectified, Jarman will, in the words of John Litweiler, 'remain one of our unacknowledged legislators'.[5]



JAK KILBY

● SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Art Ensemble
A Jackson In Your House (Affinity), 1969
The Paris Sessions (Arista), 1969
People In Sorrow (Nessa), 1969
Message To Our Folks (Affinity), 1969
Rees And The Smooth Ones (Affinity), 1969
Les Stances A Sophie (Nessa), 1970.
With Fontella Bass (America), 1970
Live, Parts 1 & 2 (Affinity), 1970
Phase One (America), 1971
Live At Mandell Hall (Delmark), 1972
Bap Tizum (Atlantic), 1972
Fanfare For The Warriors (Atlantic), 1973
Kabalaba (AECO), 1974
Nice Guys (ECM), 1978
Full Force (ECM), 1980
Urban Bushmen (ECM), 1980
Among The People (Praxis), 1980

Lester Bowie
Numbers 1 & 2 (Nessa), 1967
Fast Last (Muse), 1974
Rope-A-Dope (Muse), 1975
The 5th Power (Black Saint), 1978
The Great Pretender (ECM), 1981

Joseph Jarman
Song For (Delmark), 1966
As If It Were The Seasons (Delmark), 1968
Sunbound (AECO), 1976
– with **Don Moye**
Egwu-Anwu (India Navigation), 1978
Black Palladins (Black Saint), 1979
Earth Passage – Density (Black Saint), 1981

Roscoe Mitchell
Sound (Delmark), 1966
Old-Quartet (Nessa), 1967
Congliptious (Nessa), 1968
Quartet (Sackville), 1975
Nonaah (Nessa) 1976, 77
LRG – The Maze – S II Examples (Nessa), 1978
Snurdy McGurdy And Her Dancin' Shoes (Nessa), 1980
More Cutouts (Cecma), 1981

A complete Art Ensemble discography, by Eddy Janssens and Hugo de Craen, is published by New Think

Roscoe Mitchell's solo releases have, in contrast, underlined his position on the cutting edge of Chicago experimentalism. He and AACM-colleague Anthony Braxton are the leading visionaries of Seventies' and Eighties' jazz; but whereas Braxton's perspectives are astronomical (literally – his plans include compositions for linked orchestras on three planets, five planets, in different star systems and different galaxies!), Mitchell's procedure, particularly evident in his live solo work, is like that of the nuclear physicist, striving to break down musical elements into their basic particles. Stark, elaborate, intimate, his best Seventies' work includes the 'Nonaah' series, 'L-R-G', 'S II Examples' and his piece for eight percussionists, 'The Maze'.

In the Eighties, Mitchell has pursued his space explorations in partnership with saxist Gerald Oshita and tenor vocalist Tom Buckner, while his 'Sound' groups with trumpeter Hugh Ragin and percussionist Tami Tabbal have flirted with funk and rap and on LPs like *Snurdy McGurdy And Her Dancin' Shoes* and *More Cutouts* he swings with a positive *joie de vivre* that's a far remove from the often wracked and violent solos of the last decade.

Ironically, as Art Ensemble tours have become more frequent (and presumably more profitable) in recent years, the musical risk-taking has shifted to the band's solo ventures. After fifteen trail-blazing years, is this a sign that the group is getting stale? Buried perhaps under the weight of its achievements?

I ask Lester Bowie, has success taken a toll of the Art Ensemble?

'We kinda *tired*,' he laughs. 'Like, every day you're in a different country, every day there's a concert. We won't be



playing this much in the future, 'cause it's not conducive to the music. But you have to do these things to get known. When you're comin' up, you gotta *work*, 'cause you ain't like The Beatles or The Stones, so you ain't gettin' paid that much. We gotta work damn near every night just to pay the bills back home!'

Surely you're famous now, I protest. You must be reasonably well off.

'No, man,' says Bowie. 'I don't imagine we make as much money as the average mailman or policeman.'

I raise my eyebrows in disbelief and he laughs. 'No, that's about it. That's how it averages out. I mean, we got a large cash-flow but it's travel agents and airlines that get that money, man, and hotels and taxis . . . By the time you get to yours, it's like the same as a schoolteacher.'

He shrugs. 'And we're not that popular, not like *pop* cats. But we will be,' he grins, 'things are gonna get *real* big.'

What things? I ask.

'Oh that's all top secret,' Bowie laughs. 'You'll find out. In the next few years you'll hear some *unbelievable* shit!'

'THIS IS THE LAST TIME, BABY, I FOOL AROUND WITH YOU.'

MUDDY WATERS — CHICAGO 1949.

LESTER BOWIE makes the trumpet fart, then growl like an aeroplane. The band jangle their bells and gongs, building up waves of shimmering sound, then take a round of long solos to loosen up. They hit their stride with a percussion piece, frenzied flurries of drums and congas, then follow with a lovely piss-take waltz. They go out in glory: Bowie *smokes*, Mitchell twists himself inside out on soprano, Jarman reaches for God in a frantic, gushing, celebratory tenor solo that is the night's true highlight.

But despite the brilliance of the execution, there's a lurking suspicion that I've heard all this before from the Art Ensemble. Are they not becoming a little predictable, too indulgent of their audience's expectations?

Lester Bowie disagrees.

'No. The people who know us *don't* know what to expect – our audience expects the unexpected. And we design our sets to let in the unknown, so anything can happen.'

Later I pursue this point when I grab a couple of minutes with Roscoe Mitchell and Malachi Favors, who are packing up in the next-door dressing-room. Do you still set yourself musical problems to solve onstage? I ask.

'Oh, there's always problems,' Favors smiles blissfully. He speaks very softly and pads around with a beatific expression on his face. Biographies say he was born in Mississippi in 1937 but, in press handouts, he tells a different tale: 'Into being in this universe some 43,000 years ago. Moved around and then was ordered to this Planet Earth by the higher forces, Allah De Lawd Thank You Jesus Good God a Mighty . . . for the purpose of serving my duty as a Music Messenger.'

I suspect that behind this saintly demeanour, Mr Favors is a great wind-up artist. Er, what problems? I ask.

'Well,' he considers, 'music itself, even though you love it, it's a problem. Music, period, is a problem. You might equate that with a wife or a sweetheart. I mean, it's all beautiful, but there can be problems.'

Ah. Well, for instance, do you ever lose control of the music onstage?

He nods. 'I've found that happens, yes. It happens in all music. Sometimes you just lose control. You can be playing along and suddenly it gets away from you. You can look at it as a parallel to life: you might plan it *this* way, but it goes *that* way. Mmm, I hate to say this, but a lot of music only deals with make believe, like – I love you baby, blah blah – but our music deals with life more closely, because there's some of it that doesn't sound good. So in life, everything is not perfect. And the music comes in this form 'cause we open ourselves to be creative.'

This sounds suspiciously like more cosmic bullshitting but Favors' voice is so soothing I'm almost lulled into believing him. I try a different tack. After all these years, I say, what keeps you interested in the band? Have your goals changed?

Favors considers. 'OK. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. Since Mr Mitchell here was the founder, I'll let him expand.'

Roscoe Mitchell, small, taut, wiry, has been giving me this fixed stare ever since I came in the room. Now, his look becomes so intense his eyeballs almost burst their sockets and he speaks in a clipped, rapid-fire style.

'No, we have the same goals we always had. You know, like practise our instruments, try to create music, that's what we do. These were the goals we had at the beginning, along with, you know, uplifting the community and teaching younger musicians and being able to have more control over our destinies – that kind of thing.'

Presumably there's less hostility to the music these days?

'Hostility?' Mitchell looks blank.

Hostility to Black music in the States. Isn't that why you moved to France in 1969?

'No, it was our calling to go out and do these things. That's why we did them. We felt the need to go out and play our music, and we believed in what we were doing. If you look at it, we've exhibited that, that we were serious about it. Everything follows from that. It all falls into place, our history, the AACM, that whole approach.'

I try a question about the Art Ensemble's ironic distancing of themselves from the traditions they reclaim. How come your marches, for example, are so often played as parodies?

Mitchell bristles. 'We've done all kinds of different things, man! We've got records with straight up and down marches on them, listen to *Congliptious*. But that's not even the point. We've done all types of marches to represent certain pictures that we

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WHERE WERE YOU IN '62?



In 1962, British trad jazz expired with a loud 'pop'. Standing by were the modernists and UK bluesers, ready to make a grab for musical allegiances, while bossa nova boomed.

Chrissie Murray remembers this eventful year well . . . how about you?

IN 1962, America's negro-aimed *Ebony* magazine triumphantly documented the fact that negro musicians, for perhaps the first time, were in a position to cash in on a commercialisation of the negro folk idiom.

'In the Fifties, Dizzy, Bird and Miles planted the seed but Brubeck and Chet Baker harvested the crop But now,' declared *Ebony*, smugly, 'Ray Charles, Cannonball and Horace Silver are doing the work and, baby, they're out there making the bread . . .'

In 1962, it has to be said, that Britain – *and* America, for that matter – were still largely unmoved by Ornette Coleman's futuristic forays. That year, Coleman gave his memorable concert at New York's Town Hall and promptly retired for two years.

The British scene had split into two virtually warring factions by 1962. If the British traditionalists and modernists were ever to meet, it's interesting that American blues was to offer a significant, if unlikely rendezvous that year.

In 1962, the 'ethnicity' of the Fifties' trad boom was dealt a severe and painful blow by 'commercialism'. That year, Acker Bilk's 'Stranger On The Shore' and Kenny Ball's 'Midnight In Moscow' were huge chart successes but they had more in common with Denmark Street than Bourbon Street.

The biggest surprise in 1962 (to everyone!) was the chart entry of US modernist Dave Brubeck with 'Take Five'. Now, Tin Pan Alley really *was* confused.

By the end of 1962, the British jazz press was lobbing its editorial grenades at the new US craze – the bossa nova (or 'new beat'). Tenorist Stan Getz and guitarist Charlie Byrd – such highly respected West Coasters – had a chart hit with 'Desifinado'.

Before long, much of America's jazz establishment was learning the jazz samba – and, for virtually the first time, jazz was making *money* . . .

DIGGING INTO THE DIVES . . .

There were five main London clubs in 1962.

Ken Colyer's Club in Great Newport Street was the trad purist's mecca, founded by New Orleans-inspired trumpeter Ken Colyer. Here, its prophets chalked up an interesting line in graffiti – like an argument as to whether or not pioneer Buddy Bolden *had* ever existed.

Jazzshows at 100 Oxford Street (later to become the 100 Club) played host to Acker Bilk, Kenny Ball, Terry Lightfoot, Alan Elsdon, Alex Welsh – and just about every lauded trad band in the land.

Ronnie Scott's (then a cellar in Gerrard Street) had been a haven for modernists since 1959. Here, seven nights a week, you could hear reedsmen Tubby Hayes, Ronnie himself, Bobby Wellins, Dick Morrissey and Ronnie Ross, as well as Ronnie's own quartet with Stan Tracey the resident pianist, alongside newly imported American legends.

Sam and Jeff Kruger's Flamingo and All-Nighter Club (33–37 Wardour Street) was one of the biggest and most comfortable, although still operating a 'soft-drinks only' policy. Regulars included modernists like reedsmen Tommy Whittle and Don Rendell (with a highly promising new alto-player, Graham Bond), drummer Tony Kinsey and Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames.

The Marquee (165 Oxford Street, then underneath the Academy Cinema) was run seven nights a week by the National Jazz Federation. Sunday night was 'Big Band Nite' with the John Williams Band. The rest of the week . . . trad/mainstream trumpeter Humphrey Lyttelton and clarinettist Wally Fawkes, or modernist alto-man Joe Harriott and flugel-player Shake Keane.

MAN/DAD – DELETE WHERE NOT APPLICABLE

You could spot the jazz-fan caricature, circa 1962, at 100 yards.

The Traddie male went in for shapeless woolly jumper and/or tweed jacket with leather-patched elbows (often sporting a Ban the Bomb badge), shapeless trousers, brogues or sandals. For some reason, they called each other 'Dad', irrespective of gender.

The Modernist's taste stretched to a crew-cut (to look like American heroes Gerry Mulligan, Al Cohn or Chet Baker), wore a sharper suit (well, the trousers usually had a crease). They called everyone 'Man' . . . ('I'm So Hip I even call my girlfriend "Man",' trilled observant singer-pianist Blossom Dearie.

You could pass through the portals of a sacred jazz emporium in 1962 for a cheapo five-bob, or – go really upmarket – at ten shillings.

You were dead lucky if you could buy a beer (licensing laws were almost impenetrable in 1962) but 1s 6d would buy you two cups of gritty coffee topped with beige soap-suds, and Seven-Up was an in-vogue thirst-quencher. Not surprisingly, most alcoholics chose to be modernists – Ronnie Scott's Club had a licence till *1 a.m.*

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

With 1962 came an unprecedented invasion of American heroes. The Americans were welcomed like gods ('Tenorist Zoot Sims arrived at Heathrow Airport last Wednesday morning at 10.15 . . .', blurted one jazz paper breathlessly, as though still in disbelief).

In the mid-Fifties, the Musicians Union ban had been lifted – foreign musicians *could* play concert-halls here providing a 'man-for-man' exchange deal was arranged.

The credit for bringing this vital two-way traffic to *club level* must go to Ronnie Scott and partner Pete King. The tenacious King pioneered the first exchange just before Christmas 1961. After protracted negotiations, Britain's Tubby Hayes was booked into New York's Half Note Club. In exchange, Zoot Sims appeared at Ronnie's to exuberant fanfares.

Soon to follow were other American saxophone legends Lucky Thompson, Dexter Gordon, Johnny Griffin, Roland Kirk, Al Cohn, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins, Don Byas, Ben Webster, Benny Golson . . . Overnight, American heroes were no longer just pictures on an LP cover – the British jazz fan listened in awe and watched (close up) in amazement.

American musicians arrived for big, national tours with their casts of thousands throughout 1962. The year kicked off with Norman Granz's prestigious February–March 'Jazz at the Philharmonic' tour starring Ella Fitzgerald and the great Coleman Hawkins.

In April, Harold Davison – not to be outdone – went one better, and brought the entire Count Basie Orchestra complete with trumpeter Thad Jones, tenorist Frank Foster, guitarist Freddie Green and vocalist Ocie Smith. Sharing the bill was Lambert, Hendricks and Ross. The same month, the traditionalists queued all night to see the legend – Louis Armstrong.

In June, punters dug deep into their pockets for 'jazz singer' Frank Sinatra's first visit here since 1953. This charity gig (for invalid children) also featured the Johnny Dankworth Orchestra and the winsome, MOR King Brothers. Held at the Royal Festival Hall, Sinatra's appearance received the royal stamp of approval with the presence of Princess Margaret.

However, if the fans could bear to wait another week . . . an eight-bob ticket would buy a stalls seat at the Finsbury Park Astoria for pianist Error Garner's *first* visit to Britain.

September–October brought more tough decisions – pianist George Shearing and ex-Basie singer Joe Williams with pianist Junior Mance. *Or* . . . the now-legendary Modern Jazz Quartet with their novel penguin-suits, bow-ties and trinkling laidback chamber jazz.

In November, for a mere 6 shillings you could see bebop trumpet-giant Dizzy Gillespie and the soon-to-be canonised John Coltrane, followed – a week later, for 7s 6d – by Dave Brubeck's quartet, complete with altoist Paul Desmond . . .

And, just before Christmas, in came the jump-blues king Louis Jordan to gig with Chris Barber (although Jordan nearly didn't make it as London was shut-down by a record-breaking pea-souper fog).

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE USA . . .

Trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie spoke out seriously about blues-hating negro musicians, explaining that 'they see an association between blues music and their unhappy past, and they're ashamed of it . . .'.

Britain's Chris Barber was honoured by being invited to play at the First International Jazz Festival in Washington, DC, alongside Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.

Quincy Jones was in the studio with 19-year-old soul singer Freda Payne – who had once sung in his big band in Chicago. And singer Erma Franklin fronted Lloyd Price's 16-piece band at the Peppermint Lounge.

Blind multi-instrumentalist Roland Kirk was told to beware of a rival . . . Ray Charles was raving about some 11-year-old kid called Little Stevie Wonder who 'played harmonica, piano, organ, drums – *and* sang'.



COURTESY OF BBC

Jimmy Deuchar and Tubbs



Poll-winner Shake Keane

Norman Granz — toasting success?





Jazz Couriers Scott and Hayes



In July, James Baldwin published his controversial novel, *Another Country*, with its explitic opening episode of a disastrous affair between a black jazz-drummer and a white girl from Georgia. The characters' 'sexual practices make those of "Lady Chatterley" seem pristine,' protested the *Herald Tribune*.

Comedian Lenny Bruce was in trouble with California's obscenity and narcotics laws. US jazzers hailed Bruce as 'the Charlie Parker in the comedy field', adding (prophetically, as it turned out), 'Listen to him *while* you can'.

A conference was called in New York, headed by Quincy Jones, aimed at improving 'the Public Image of Jazz'.

ON THE HOME FRONT

BBC Radio experimented for the first time with stereo broadcasting but they seemed to have their doubts, with producer Brian Willey asking, 'Does the technique have *any* appeal?'.

In April, several British promoters agreed that 'by the end of 1962, *modern* jazz will be the thing'. But promoter Don Brooks added a stern warning – 'They should concentrate on playing at speeds the crowds can dance to, and cut out the interminable solos . . .'.

In May – horror – the BBC *banned* modern jazz from the Light Programme's weekly *Jazz Club* sessions, saying: 'Modern jazz will continue on Network Three and the Third Programme where it belongs with other minority-appeal subjects'. Modernist bandleader Johnny Dankworth was outraged and promptly refused to do *any* broadcasts until the ban was lifted.

In June, Acker Bilk became one of the first artists to be issued on EMI's new, revolutionary 3 ips tapes.

Central Record Distributors and Dobell's Record Shop in London were served with an injunction to prevent them from issuing 'certain recordings' of Acker Bilk which, he claimed, was 'old and unrepresentative material'.

The Goodyear Rubber Company found a novel promotional gimmick by selling an LP of Duke Ellington and trumpeter Bobby Hackett at petrol stations for a bargain 12s 6d.

By the end of 1962, Hohner's were making aspiring musos an offer that couldn't be refused. As producers of harmonicas, guitars, banjos, drum-kits and electric organs, anyone wanting to form a group should write to them . . .

THE POLLS

In June – ironically, the same week that several major trad clubs announced they were closing down – Britain's weekly *Jazz News* revealed its readers' poll for 1962. And, frankly, it didn't look too good for trad . . .

For the Americans . . . modernist Miles Davis (still riding high here on his *Sketches of Spain* LP success with Gil Evans) was placed Top Trumpeter (Louis Armstrong was third). Modernist John Coltrane beat New Orleans King Sidney Bechet as Top Soprano-Player. Duke Ellington was Top Composer with trad-idol Jelly Roll Morton lowest at tenth.

In the British section, the traddies were grimly hanging on with Humphrey Lyttelton (Top Trumpeter), George Chisholm (Top Trombonist) and Sandy Brown (Top Clarinettist). But modernist Dudley Moore was Top Pianist (traddie Lennie Felix was fourth).

The British modernists stomped all over the top in other sections. Tubby Hayes was top in Tenor, Flute *and* Vibes, while Phil Seaman (that popular attraction at the Scott club) was Top Drummer.

Top Small Group was the Joe Harriott Quintet (Ken Colyer had plummetted to sixth place).

In the Miscellaneous section, Shake Keane received top place on Flugelhorn, with Humph scrabbling back with a second on Tenor Horn, and the brilliant bebop concert-harpist David Snell coming in at third.

Overall, the 1962 polls showed a walkover for the British modernists.

As 1962 sped by, 'high costs' were forcing promoter Norman Granz (who wasn't exactly short of a bob or two) to book incoming American legends like Ella Fitzgerald and the Ellington orchestra on economy flights to the UK.

In Germany, US trumpeter Chet Baker was arrested on more, much-publicised drugs charges, having just previously run into similar trouble in Italy.

New York's Senator Keating made a sobering announcement: 'Of the 60,000 known drug addicts in the nation, 25,000 live in New York City. Almost 50 babies addicted to heroin are born each year in one New York hospital alone . . .'.

New Orleans' pianist Emma Barrett was robbed of the proceeds of a benefit concert given to replace loss of her life savings in a pre-Christmas robbery.

Dave Brubeck was having a wild time finding ways to spend his 'Take Five' proceeds. His new steel and wood house was being built in Connecticut to the tune of $100,000 – occupying '5,800 square feet on 16 acres, with 15 rooms . . .'.

In Britain, the latest in hi-fi was a 'new stereo kit' – silent till you wore a special stethoscope-type headset. Cheaper than most mono record-players, the set was aimed at youngsters. According to the advertising blurb – 'Your mother can watch *Coronation Street* while you sit blissfully unaware, absorbed by Ellington . . .' (Well, wouldn't *you*?)

Seven years after Charlie Parker's death, the wrangling over his estate finally ended with the carve-up of the century between assorted wives, relatives and kids. Geraldine Parker got 27½%; Leon Parker – 25%; Baird Parker (son by Chan Woods) – 25%; Rebecca Parker Davis (wife No. 1) – 7½%; and Doris Parker – 7½%. The Parker estate was estimated at $100,000. If only he could have taken it with him.

POLITICS

In January 1962, Norman Granz included a desegregation clause in the contracts of all jazz musicians playing US clubs or concert halls.

The British Musicians Union banned its members from recording music for advertising jingles. In 1962, £6 an hour was the going rate; the MU were demanding £24. British jazz musicians affected included Tubby Hayes, Tony Kinsey, Bill le Sage, Johnny Dankworth, Ronnie Ross and Ronnie Scott.

US drummer Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* was banned in South Africa, in spite of an amendment to the original sleeve-note's reference to Sharpeville and other South African hot-spots.

The Russian newspaper *Izvestia* praised jazz musicians at a Moscow youth festival for 'not trying to copy implicitly US jazz'. Fifteen amateur bands entered – the winners got a big cake.



If you wanted to know where the jazz scene was at in 1962 you could try the one-and-nines at the local picture-palace.

All Night Long was a self-conscious and supposedly serious modern-jazz film melodrama, loosely based on *Othello*. A ridiculous, clichéd script was written round an all-night, jazzers' rave-up with a complicated sub-plot of a crumbling marriage and the evils of drugs. Events were brought to an unseemly head by a drummer who was a *head*-case, nicely played by Patrick 'The Prisoner' McGoohan. The film's saving grace was its music and brief guest appearances from Charlie Mingus (mostly unsmiling) and Dave Brubeck (smiling). British faces (both smiling *and* unsmiling) included Tubby Hayes, Bert Courtley, Alan Ganley and Johnny Dankworth.

A sillier affair was *Band of Thieves* which had Acker Bilk and the Paramount Jazzmen cavorting around as paroled jailbirds, embarking on ludicrous robberies while playing one-night stands.

April brought *It's Trad, Dad!* – 'the film treat with the cool beat . . . bursting with youthful vigour, this mixture of music and mirth is a tonic for the blues . . .'. Groan. All the major traddies were featured – Barber, Bilk and Ball, plus Terry Lightfoot, Bob Wallis and the Temperance Seven. A few pop and rock & roll stars were thrown in to widen the appeal but generally add to the confusion. It was Certificate 'U', in that it was suitable for children.

But, if you were into swashbuckling – 1962 cinema-style – *The Day The Earth Caught Fire* was an action-packed British thriller. Here, *Daily Express* reporter (Edward Judd) single-handedly averted the earth's collision with the sun. Alan Elsdon's trad band rush-released a single of its jazz theme to the States for the film's Broadway premier.

The Wild and the Willing was one of the better dramatic offerings. Starring Ian McShane and new-discovery Samantha Eggar, the plot revealed unspeakable (for the time) goings-on at a red-brick university circa 1962. Here the jazz connection was Mike Cotton's Jazzmen who appeared in the film and actually played live onstage at the film's premier at the Odeon, Leicester Square.

. . . continues on page 55▶

Johnny Dankworth — a busy year



IN PHASE WITH TREVOR WATTS' MOIRÉ MUSIC

MOIRÉ MUSIC is currently embarking on a rising spiral of activity which has swung interest back towards the group's leader, Trevor Watts.

This spiral began with the Bracknell Festival (for which Watts composed this year's festival commission) where Moiré Music proved, once again, to be one of the highlights of the weekend. Their performance is due for broadcast, courtesy of the BBC Radio 3 on 20 November. December sees the release of Moiré Music's first album on Watts' Arc label and on 16 January they embark on a Contemporary Music Network tour for the Arts Council which will take them through to the 26th. An appearance at the Zurich Jazz Festival is scheduled and dates are already being negotiated for the group on the French festival circuit next year.

Yet familiarity had bred, if not contempt, then certainly complacency. Watts has been at the heart of British contemporary and free jazz for, near enough, twenty years. During that time he has helped pioneer British free improvisation with the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, the dense powerful free jazz which flowered during the Stockwell Plough sessions in South London and some of the earliest and most unusual fusions of jazz with rock rhythms in Amalgam, in addition to numerous other projects. During that time, he has also known what it is to be taken for granted, to be regarded as just another part of the fabric of musical activity. Moiré Music has changed that.

Watts' compositions for the group explore the shifting patterns which emerge when two or more repeating motifs are placed against each other and move in and out of phase. He then goes further, mating these with the turbulent excitement of the jazz idiom. In doing so, Watts combines the rigorous drive and structure found in the work of such 'minimalist' composers as Philip Glass and Steve Reich with the prehensile energy and passion inherent in jazz, each element providing a framework for the other. It has proved a rich lode to mine and, in performance, by the particularly strong line-up which Watts has assembled as Moiré Music, its refreshing buoyancy has proved popular with audiences (as at Bracknell in 1982 when it had audiences dancing).

But Moiré Music is only one of a brace of projects which Watts has organised since he moved from London to Hastings two years ago. Others include a new Amalgam with drummer Liam Genockey and Peter Knight (the Steeleye Span violinist), and the Trevor Watts Drum Orchestra.

'You have more time out here,' Watts states, 'there's more space. I'm not out playing so much as I was – there aren't the places to play – but you have to find some sort of musical activity, so I spend the time either writing music or trying to get work for something I've organised. On another level, writing out the parts for the ten-piece is quite a chore but here I can sit out in the garden and do it; that makes it less of a chore. In the London flat, with Margaret and the children in a more confined space, I wouldn't have had the patience to do that.'

It cannot, however, be claimed that Watts' activity in London was sluggish. Having taken up the saxophone at the age of seventeen during a stint of national service in the airforce with John Stevens, Paul Rutherford and Bob Downes, Watts came to London with Rutherford and both were involved in the New Jazz Orchestra for a while. They ran into Stevens again and 'decided we'd like to play together again, but play our own music and get that sorted out'.

The decision led to the Little Theatre Club which they tried to run seven nights a week (indicating the optimism and enthusiasm prevalent during the late Sixties) and, ultimately, to the Spontaneous Music Ensemble. SME were one of the seminal groups in the development of British free improvisation. Gradually, they severed stylistic links with their more strictly jazz antecedents (in Watts' case Parker, Rollins, Coltrane and, especially, Dolphy) whilst remaining faithful to the spirit of their music. It was an affinity which would become more overt when Stevens moved his sessions from the intimate confines of the Little Theatre Club to the inevitably more robust atmosphere of the Plough pub at Stockwell.

However, as he felt that the SME became more rarified, Watts became increasingly less happy with his role in it, 'although I learned a lot during my time with SME and I got a lot of highs from it at the time'. Eventually, he left SME to concentrate on his own projects, resulting in Amalgam. The group used elements of rock music as part of the resources on which they were able to draw, a manoeuvre which was to earn them the label 'jazz-rock' although, as Watts indicates, that was only part of the picture.

'In actual fact it was never supposed to be that. It was just a case of meeting people and finding their attitude to be quite open. They happened to come from a different area of music but we could nevertheless play together. We could talk about it and learn things from each other. That's how the music has developed.'

This has been an approach which Watts has adopted throughout his career. In the same way he was later to introduce guitarist Keith Rowe into the Amalgam line-up with startling and significant results and, more recently, to begin a musical collaboration with violinist Peter Knight. From a folk(-rock) background Knight had never improvised freely until he met Watts but their partnership now spans Moiré Music, Amalgam and the Drum Orchestra.

Watts' time in London saw his development from one of the rising generation of new talent to consolidating his position at the heart of musical activity; it also saw him develop a distinct and readily identifiable voice on his instrument. He is capable of piling on the pressure to build the music towards climaxes which erupt without ever sacrificing intelligence to chaos, to turn melodies through surprising avenues or handle a ballad with a bittersweet control he has made all his own. But his most significant attribute has been his ability to balance intellect and emotion.

Consequently, he found himself much in demand, working with Watts/Guy/Stevens and other groups which evolved from the Plough sessions, Harry Miller's quintet with Willem Breuker, larger ensembles such as Keith Tippett's Ark, the London Jazz Composers Orchestra, John Stevens' Dance Orchestra and numerous other small and ad-hoc groupings. Additionally, he organised Amalgam (and later the enlarged but short-lived Amalgam Orchestra), the Universal Music Group and fortnightly sessions at New Merlin's Cave in the face of disappointingly small audiences.

However, it was also in London that the germ of the ideas which were to spawn Moiré Music was nurtured. 'Those ideas had been there for a long time. I started by just overdubbing my soprano and working on ideas that way. But rather than just making records using that technique I thought I'd ask three other soprano players to take part in these ideas. That was in the flat. As we worked on it I kept arriving at more patterns, later I added the violins and liked the sound of them. The baritone was a last-minute inclusion; I suddenly thought I'd

better get some bottom end in there, to give the sound of the group more spread. But it was one thing to have the idea, another to organise a group – that requires a lot of time and energy.'

Hastings seems to have supplied the environment in which Watts could bring those ideas to fruition. Although reminiscent of the 'minimalists', Watts was not influenced by them as he worked on his phase shift compositions. They unwittingly shared a common source as he followed up his own basic interest in ideas he found prevalent in African and some other folk musics and combined them with material which had surfaced in other playing situations. In fact, Watts had not heard the work of Reich, Glass *et al* at that time.

'I want to use the resultant melodies which emerge from the layers of repeating themes because, when it's working correctly, I think the sound is very beautiful,' says Watts, describing the particular chemistry of his compositions for Moiré Music, 'but over the top of that I'm interested in putting linear melodic ideas and incorporating improvisation; I want the group to have a certain flexibility.'

Nevertheless, Moiré Music is the most carefully structured of the projects with which Watts has been closely associated. This springs, in part, from the fact that, since leaving London, Watts has found more time and patience to rework and formalise ideas for the group (for example, from snippets of material garnered in listening to live tapes of the freewheeling Drum Orchestra). Watts highlights some of the other factors involved:

'I developed a slight dissatisfaction with the looser things. I enjoyed them at the time, enjoyed taking part in them and they gave me quite a lot of pleasure. But then I started to think that, for once in my life, I wanted to hear the music played in the way that I could hear it in my head, in a way that I thought was beautiful and uplifting. With this music that involved careful planning and intense rehearsals.

'I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing to have to rehearse hard to get a piece of music together. Larry (Stabbins), for instance, thought it was a hard gig and the hardest music he'd ever had to play. That doesn't necessarily make it good, I know, and I would never pursue something I'd written down in an unyielding way. But if something was wrong – like the feel of the way a part of the music was played – then I would try and get it right, get a certain tightness into it. I think of music as a learning process.

'There is an area of the unknown which I approach in both my playing and my composition. You're always trying to stretch your own area of musical knowledge and experience – some people may see their activity as attempting to stretch the area of musical knowledge as a whole, but you can't really make those claims – then that might have some knock-on effect.

'Music has to be so important that you're slightly desperate about it, you need the same sort of fervour that you had when you first started playing. I still have those feelings, and that seems very natural to me.'

Perhaps not surprisingly, in view of his perception of music as a learning process, Watts sees music as a continually developing material rather than a product that can be fixed and called 'finished'. His attitude towards it is correspondingly evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

'I'm not the sort of person who would tear it all down and just do something else,' he says. 'I try to see things through until they die naturally, rather than prematurely, so in that respect perhaps I develop things slowly. Similarly I see playing with people like Liam (Genockey) and Peter (Knight) as being a long-term process. As long as it keeps on developing that doesn't matter to me, I've got plenty of time to see it through. It's the same with Moiré Music; it's not a finished item, it's a transitionary thing, a continuing process.

'The band is evolving now of its own accord. For instance, Larry Stabbins has left – he hasn't really got the time now (a reference to his involvement in Working Week) – and he'd been quite unhappy in the band over the last few gigs. So Paul Rutherford's in the band now.'

With Rutherford's trombone replacing Stabbins' soprano in a front-line which previously boasted four sopranos, the texture of the group will inevitably change. Watts is adamant that this will not be detrimental to the character of the band; 'Because of the way in which the parts have been worked out I think the music will sound fine whatever instruments play it. Besides, this music's always about people as much as instruments, isn't it?'

As all the current activity suggests, there's plenty of life in Moiré Music yet. In fact 'more work seems to be coming our way', affirms Watts. 'At one time I used to send off letters, follow them up with phone calls and everything and the response was minimal, especially when compared with the amount of effort involved. But there seems to be a sort of knock-on effect now. We played at Bracknell and there were a lot of French promoters there, so now it looks like we'll go to France next year. At the Moers Festival there was an East German promoter who heard us and wants us. And the audience response wherever we've played has been fantastic.

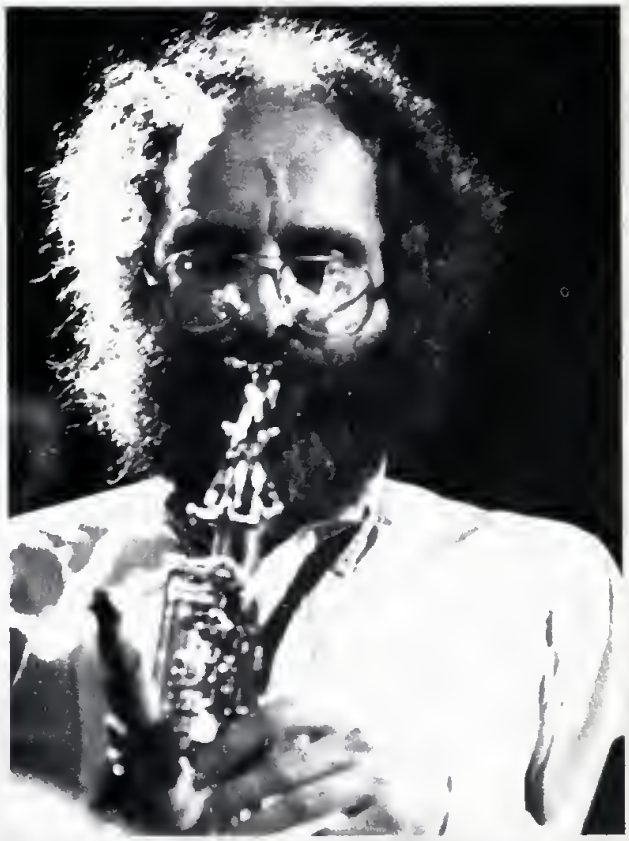
'I think we've created a lot of this interest because Moiré Music is very attractive in an external way (more so than many other things) and festivals also tend to like larger groups anyway.'

Attractive the group may be, but they also have the substance to back that up. A factor which cannot have escaped the attention of ECM producer Manfred Eicher, who is reportedly showing interest in recording the band. There's no shortage of fresh musical ideas either, as the Bracknell commission indicated in adding voices to an already powerful ensemble.

Watts describes himself as a basically optimistic person (and with Moiré Music on an upward spiral perhaps he has reason to be), and that is mirrored in the uplifting, celebratory feel of his compositions for the group. Moiré Music has the capacity to communicate that directly to its audience, a factor which goes some way towards explaining their success. It is something of which Watts is acutely aware:

'When I work through ideas I will actually look for the ones which give me a lift and which I think will, therefore, give other people a lift as well. I want to communicate that to other people.'

Kenneth Ansell



IRENA POND

THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN TEO

TEO MACERO is best known as the producer of dozens of classic Miles Davis LPs, from *Sketches Of Spain* to *Star People*. Here he talks to old friend Max Jones about his production secrets, career as a composer, and 25-year-long collaboration with the enigmatic Miles.

IN MANY jazz buffs' minds, an association with Miles Davis is triggered off at the drop of the name, Macero: understandable because of a working relationship which goes back almost thirty years.

Master-producer and composer Teo Macero accepts the inevitability of his being linked with the trumpet-player who so greatly impressed him. So, of course, I asked what of Miles, and was Teo still working with him on anything?

He laughed briefly and said no, not to his knowledge; he hadn't heard anything from the source.

'Miles told me, the last time I spoke to him, that he wanted to do the *Decoy* album by himself and I says OK. You say George Butler was executive producer? Well, I don't know anything about that, only that he wished to do it on his own. No, it's not bad but not much different from *Star People*, I thought.'

Star People, which has sold well in the UK, was Macero's last production job for Davis. Did this mean the old collaboration was finished?

'I don't know because he doesn't phone me now. I thought he would have called me when I was ill in April and May last year, but no. We used to be pretty close, and I did my best to help him during his long spell of ill-health, but there it is. It would have been nice if he had called me, though.'

Was that, perhaps, because Miles now spends more spare time at his Los Angeles home?

'No, I think he just fired everybody; changed the staff, the band, everything. My guess would be he's trying to save some money.'

Speaking of which necessity, did Teo make much from his recent tribute album to Mingus?

'No, nothing. Making jazz records, unless they're really commercial, forget it! You can't sell them. I do things that I want to do and I wanted to make *Impressions Of Charles Mingus*. I'll send you a copy. I think you'll like it.'

Reverting to Miles, I wondered if Teo had seen him and Gil Evans at Avery Fisher Hall in June. He hadn't but said: 'I know he's playing well again, in person and on his latest records. I believe Gil is good for him but I don't know whether he's writing for any more of Miles' records. As you may remember, I wanted to place Miles in another fresh musical context and I would like to have recorded him with a really big sound, say the London Philharmonic. But now, well, I don't know at all what the man wants.'

CBS have hundreds of tapes, made by Miles and Macero since Davis 'got into' electronic developments, which have never surfaced on records. Teo has long complained that he was not allowed to mix and re-mix and release them in a proper, orderly fashion. A few of them have emerged but, he laments, there are hours of tape in the vaults. 'They're still sitting on a lot of that old stuff.'

So it looks like the end, for the present at least (and there have been spectacular fall-outs in the past), of the M&M partnership which had clearly stimulated both parties off and on over more than twenty-five years.

Sketches Of Spain, Filles De Kilimanjaro, The Sorcerer, Miles Smiles, Nefertiti, At Carnegie Hall, In A Silent Way, Bitches' Brew, Jack Johnson, Big Fun, Water Babies and *On The Corner* are a dozen albums from the old Miles–Macero firm. There were other collaborations, ranging from *Seven Steps To Heaven* to *Star People*.

And Teo played more than a supervisory role in the making of a good few of them. *Miles Davis At Carnegie Hall*, recorded live in May 1961, would not have existed but for Teo. The album was *Melody Maker's* 1962 Jazz Record of the Year and Macero told us (in May 1963) that it was he who caught the performance on tape, and unknown to Davis.

During Teo's last visit to England, he spoke of Davis's stated desire to maintain his roots, to be recognised by black audiences, and as a kind of champion by black people down South.

'I think he means that and I don't believe he ever lost his roots. I think the blacks always admired him; the black people I know always did.'

'I guess Miles is having a good time and making money into the millions. He makes many thousands of dollars a concert, and I heard that for his trip to Japan the money was astronomical and he only did six or seven shows. I've forgotten the figure quoted but it sure was a hell of a lot.

'No, I'm not surprised he commands so much or has such charisma, as you put it. It's because he is that kind of individual, and he uses that force and talent. Then he is an important factor in today's music, a man who has played a very important part in jazz developments. If you look over the history of music – as I do all the time – it's hard to think of another living individual that has so consistently kept up to date like Miles. Most musicians do not do it; they're in a bag and that's it.'

Over the years, Macero has made many more casual comments about Davis. Talking about the effect of leadership upon a band, he said that the leader – of Miles's or any band – had a vital influence on the performance.

'You better believe it. You know, when Miles has been playing and then he walks off stage, he still wants to listen to the band. If anything goes wrong he comes back, he doesn't jump, he just saunters over and he may pull a guy's hand off the instrument or gone over and turned the amplifier up or told the drummer something. He'll change it around and bring everybody right back in focus again. And all of a sudden there they are. Duke used to do that beautifully, too.'

Teo is a firm believer in studio engineering and mixing and re-mixing which could be termed super-creative. If a recording sounded fine in the studio, but not so good when it came out, then Teo affirms that it probably wasn't engineered properly in the first place.

'That's why you need a producer sitting up there with some experience of the music – even in the States, you do. If you leave it to the normal staff you're in trouble. But even a bad tape, the worst you may have, is not hopeless. You can do wonders with it if you know how.

'A musician asked how I achieved that certain sound, on one of Miles' albums, and he said, "It had a lot of bass and this and that, and sounded sort of good and big and real. Tell me what you did." I didn't tell him my secret, of course, but says I'd be glad to do it for him if he sent me the next tapes he'd made. Really, it is a stupid thing I came across many years ago and the engineers still think I'm nuts for doing it. I might be nuts, too, but the public, when they listen to the results, they realise it's an interesting, big-sounding record. That's what the record business is all about, I says.

'And you're not destroying anything. You're adding to it, and I'm open to all these ideas and techniques. Of course, we had several funny little machines we employed in the final mix, and I had two pieces of equipment for Miles's stuff that I used exclusively for him. I got CBS many years ago to make these for me and then eventually I bought them. The two of them are standing there and anybody could use them. I mean, if they want to use them at CBS, be my guest.

'But I used them just for Miles. One is a reverb machine that doesn't act like an ordinary reverb. And the other piece of equipment was invented by one of the engineers down there and I'm the only person uses that. Everyone says, "Great, it sounds like this guy's got eight hands," and so on. "Sounds like stereo and all that " But it's not.'

This second machine is, I imagine, the instant playback machine, a variety of tape computer, that Teo mentioned to Steve Lake in New York in 1974 (*Melody Maker*, 24/8/74). It was employed to vivid effect on the *Big Fun* album. Anyway, Teo said that he still owned it but had left it there at the studio. He said he must think about picking it up.

To find out what Teo is doing these days, I had to track him down by telephone at his family country retreat in the States.

'I'm not idle. I'm doing a lot of ballets and other things I like, and some conducting After an illness last year I've been working mostly at my place in Quogue. It's very nice here. Why don't you come out and visit?'

The following morning, Macero was off to Canada.

'Only for two days, to conduct the Quebec Symphony. I expect to enjoy that. Yes, it'll be all my own music.'

Besides playing tenor in all manner of settings, and for leaders as disparate as Larry Clinton and Charlie Mingus, Teo has arranged and composed in a wide variety of styles. He writes jazz, TV scores, film music, ballet suites and several sorts of what I'd better call heavy stuff – such as *New Music In Quarter-Tones* and the pieces he recorded in London a few years back with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He told me he had a lot of fun making 'the classical record' with such a fine orchestra and, when I dropped in on one of the Abbey Road sessions, I thought the atmosphere was agreeably informal and cordial.

Last summer, Teo sent me a tape of cuts of this music. He wrote: 'The recording I made with the London Philharmonic is just superb. I finally mixed everything and am trying to get it released. I'd like to come back soon to London to record again but at the moment have no plans.'

In August, there were still no plans. However, Teo said the record, *Fusion*, was coming out later that month on the Europa label. The music was written in the Fifties and is, I assume, the *Concerto Grosso for Jazz Combo and Symphony Orchestra* which the New York Phil, under Bernstein, performed in 1958.

Macero would like to see this album released in Britain, so if any company wishes to hear this example of his classical work – which includes a big jazz section – I will be happy to lend the record or tape, the latter labelled simply 'Teo's Various Cues'.

For, as Teo says, he certainly hasn't been idle. ■



Teo Macero

Miles at Carnegie, 19 May, 1961



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MANU DIBANGO: AFRICA'S MOST IMPORTANT MUSICIAN?



MANU DIBANGO would undoubtedly refute the claim that he is Africa's most important musician. But much evidence supports the claim that he is. His musical identity is truly international; European classical, American jazz and soul, salsa and African rhythms have all influenced him but the uniqueness in his style is essentially a combination of charismatic band leadership, a rich but unelaborate sense of composition, and virtuoso playing whether on tenor or alto sax, piano or marimba.

Born in The Cameroons in 1934, Manu's parents sent him to Paris in his mid-teens to study. Through the early and mid-Fifties he studied classical piano but was emotionally drawn to jazz: the Indian Summer of bebop and the grand shudderings of the 'New Jazz'. In the late Fifties he lived in Brussels and played saxophone in a succession of jazz bands. But, upon returning to West Africa in 1961, it was the indigenous electric dance rhythms of The Cameroons and her neighbours Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zaire which Manu instinctively threaded into the technical and spiritual fabrics of European classical and American jazz music.

He is referring to the European influence in his music when he says: 'I'm first a Musician and second Black'; and to the positive effects of African musicians in Europe when he says: 'being Afro-European means that you are African-plus. I don't say that I am *an African* musician and Africa's the only one. No – to change and strengthen your music you need to be open-minded to other cultures. That is the way forward.'

He returned to Paris in 1965 and played with people like Dick Rivers and Nino Ferrer but, far from denying his origins, a unique fusion resulted. He was both respecting the ballad and jazz song form which was popular, both in Paris and West Africa, whilst imbueing it with African rhythms' wilder energies. His music was both tight, appreciative of structure, and had an abandonment, a 'freedom' inspired by jazz.

'At first, I was in love with jazz,' says Manu. 'Jazz is, to me, a way of living. It's a freedom of expression which comes through in everything I'm doing in music. Armstrong has to be my first influence. Why? Because of the voice – the voice knocks me out and, of course, the human voice is what all instruments developed from. Second, it was his trumpet. Armstrong opened up, for me, how it is possible to sing and play. Also, he gave me a lot of happiness.

'Duke Ellington is my second major influence – he is one of the best painters of music of this century. I see music like painting, in colours. As for sax-players, well, the mood of Sonny Rollins and the zest of Johnny Hodges and, of course, King Curtis. These are my favourites.'

The wild world of Fifties' bebop was there for Dibango to absorb rather than create into. It wasn't until 1981 that he released two albums, *Melodies Africaines Vols 1 & 2*, that his first instrument, the piano, was allowed the full freedom to express itself and a haunting but tentatively indulgent aloneness reminiscent of Dollar Brand came into view. Jazz phrasing, both the bottomless depths of Monk, or the cheeky crossfire of Powell, is detectable through the strong, emotive melodies he sketches. But the tunes are, first and foremost, paens to some of Africa's superlative popular tunesmiths – Francis Bebey, Toto Guillaime and Miriam Makeba to name a few. So these LPs have the twin effect of being both a return to technical source and to his own roots.

Upon returning to Africa in the late Sixties, Dibango settled in Zaire. The Congolese sound – a fusion of guitar-based up-tempo West African (soukous) rhythms and Cuban (salsa) brass and percussive patterns – had become Zaire's most popular music form and had claimed itself as the No. 1 dance rhythm over Africa. Its originators Franco and Rochereau had capitalised on their success of the late Fifties and early Sixties and their bands had long since become kinds of institutes through which musicians passed before embarking on solo careers.

In Ghana, highlife was ever popular and had grown in sophistication. The rural 'palm wine' guitar bands (which had originated in the Thirties) and the colonial swing big bands (which had held court in Accra up to independence) had amalgamated and highlife/jazz was born. This music became the aural backdrop to Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism. In Nigeria, the impact of Ghanaian highlife had spawned its own styles but most popular in Lagos were the visiting soul or popular

JAK KILBY

singers from the States. Fela Kuti's militant sprawling funk – which he named Afro-beat – changed that; Nigeria, too, had an urban indigenous sound which, whilst borrowing vital constituent parts from outside, was very 'Modern Africa', very 'sound of the street'.

In Manu Dibango's Cameroons it was the same story; Douala was a vibrant, liberated capital. The transistor radio bombarded the city with her neighbours' music and a new modern sound inevitably arrived. It was called makossa and though it was essentially an amalgam of soukous, rhumba and highlife, it had its own flavour – a hard-driving rhythm, speedy call-and-response vocals and swinging guitar patterns. Despite Manu's disappearances to Europe, the fact that he was central to makossa music's development is certain. He widened the indigenous electric style to include the slower time-signatures of the European ballad song form, introduced new instruments, quality brass and guitars and marimba, and, as he was able to travel around Africa, he brought other indigenous sources into makossa.

Though mostly instrumental, the vocal content of Dibango's cosmopolitan makossa has been heavily influenced by Zairois harmonies – perhaps the most superb and hardest to replicate element in the music. As his bands got bigger through the Seventies, women's voices would be added to deepen the sound and feel of the music, contrasting most effectively with his own much-underrated voice whose stylistic sources are scat singing and the jazz and ballad song form.

His first LP, *Manu Dibango*, was released on the Philips label in 1968, *O Boso* followed in 1971, and *Soma Coba* in 1972. The jazz tenor was there. 'Night in Zeralda' and 'Hibiscus' on *O Boso* exude a restrained Coltrane mood but the rhythmic body was too understated; it was as if Dibango was not quite where he wanted, or needed to be. *Soul Makossa* (1973) got him there.

As Fela's funky urgency gained steam, so the dance-crazy youth tapped on to international dancefloors. It was the moment for hybrids – the right moment for *Soul Makossa* to sell two million copies worldwide, make Manu a hot disco-must in the United States and Britain, and then spread like bushfire throughout Africa.

Dibango had fused an up-tempo mêlée of hypnotic melodies – spunky Junior Walker-style tenor, jazz looseness and depth, pop's economy of form and the new African music's compulsive rhythms. But *Soul Makossa* was in a class of its own, unfortunately. The internationalising of the more accessible African blends did not follow by proxy. Manu has continued to have big hits in Africa and Paris but the net of appeal never reached so far again (*Big Blow* in 1976 came closest, and his current single 'Abele Dance' on Celluloid is vast on the chic dance-floor circuit, though its success hasn't so far been reflected in sales).

Though the majors have much to answer for (inadequate promotion of the few signed-up African artists and, currently, a stubborn withholding of back catalogue), Manu sees a basic prejudice at work in the way African music has been marketed and how it is viewed.

'People (the West) expect and seem to want African music to stay at being folk music – if you do not play tom-tom, you are not an African musician! Only Black Americans can play western instruments! But every country in Africa has its own ethnic music as everywhere else does. Remember, African countries are trying to build something around themselves: nationalism and a culture of old and new. There *is* an electric Africa, people *are* dealing with technology and all that that promises.

'Things have been getting better there for the musician but it is still rough. You can get more of an idea of where African music is in Europe than back there. When you are in The Cameroon, for example, you listen only to Cameroon music; the same in Senegal. Few people are as lucky as me, for I can play coast to coast and that's because I was in the field of music before the independence. So, because of this, young musicians grab the opportunity of going to Europe, especially Paris, for then it is easier to get launched, if you are lucky, all over Africa.'

It certainly appears that the current trend – the plethora of live performance and recording centred in Paris – is giving invaluable breaks to many young singers and musicians as well as making them receptive to western styles such as jazz, soul, reggae and funk. Also, there are opportunities to mix with other African musicians and absorb new rhythms. Manu forsees important changes as a result.

'A more professional approach has to occur. They have to learn about music so as to know how to use studios. Also, they are in a position to offer and receive ideas, not just to bring their own group, play and then go back. People may come to see you but what remains when you leave? The other musicians around don't know. They cannot go into your music and explain it to the population. This is the case with Fela. I liked his Seventies' music but he hasn't developed. He needs to leave "his people" and pool resources with other musicians.'

The Paris scene, though, is run in a very *ad hoc* manner. There is no development of any one artist, no solid contracts – whoever is popular is rushed over. LPs are cut and then flood the market and then he/she is passed on and a new talent is thrust forward. This thread links the current scene to earlier periods.

Manu: 'African music has always been plundered. It is like all our natural resources. They take oil, they take coffee, they take coconuts and they take music! It is the same – the transformation occurs – then it is sold *back* to Africa. It becomes gospel, it becomes blues, it becomes soul, reggae or funk – we are eternal customers!'

After the *Makossa Man* LP in 1973, Dibango switched from

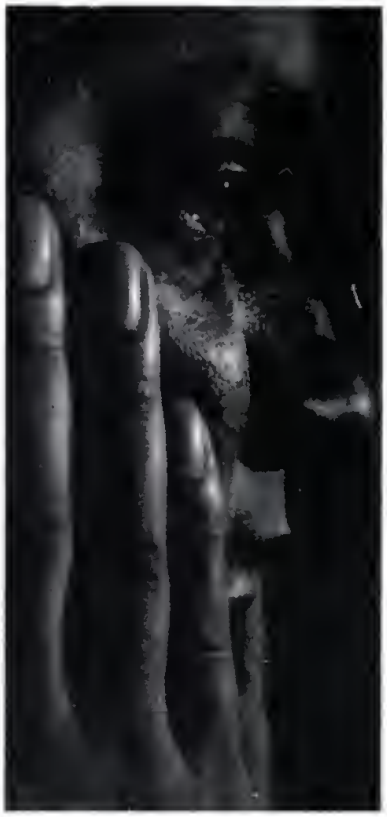
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JAN KILBY

OLIVER NELSON:

THE BLUES AND THE ABSTRACT TRUTH



Great Recordings

'Stolen moments'; 'Hoe-Down'; 'Cascades'; 'Yearnin' '; 'Butch And Butch'; 'Teenie's Blues'.
Freddie Hubbard (tpt); Oliver Nelson (as, ts); Eric Dolphy (as, flt); George Barrow (bs); Bill Evans (p); Paul Chambers (b); Roy Haynes (d).
(Impulse AS/5).
Recorded: New York – 23 February, 1961.

SOME outstanding records are distinguished by innovation, some by crystallising the essence of a great player, some are simple pieces of luck, recording a date when everybody was on their toes, the sound was good, the writing inspired, the air momentarily perfect for jazz. *The Blues And The Abstract Truth* is one of those.

Oliver Nelson was a student of jazz rather than a master and his copious explanatory notes to the original issue display a theoretical bent that was intriguingly resolved in an inherently personal playing style. His alto and tenor had slightly altered voices from each other, the higher instrument's tone cut with a snapping bitterness, the tenor as mournful as Dewey Redman's. Some of his solos here are pitched as sonic exercises, the phrasing simple and cursory in order to make the sound itself the focus.

But it was as a composer and arranger that Nelson (who later left jazz for the comfort of Hollywood studio work) made his mark. When this session was cut in February 1961 he was already an experienced writer and in contact with Eric Dolphy, whose own vocalisations were a fiercer and more virtuosic extension of Nelson's saxophone manner. Jazz itself might have been in a ferment of debate after *Kind Of Blue* and Ornette Coleman but Nelson was no iconoclast. If we had to tag the music here, it might be as hard bop with a melting blue centre.

What Nelson produced for *The Blues And The Abstract Truth* was a series of variations: all six compositions are grown from the 12-bar blues and the chords and 32 measures of 'I've Got Rhythm'. The unifying aspects of the idea are obvious but it scarcely prepares for the way in which an almost schematic series of melodies are drawn into such lovely shapes from the raw material.

'Stolen Moments', the opening track, selects three blue melodic motifs that seem to drift like seeds in a wind against a rhythm swung by Haynes' brushwork. Although the voicing of the four horns gives the melody its impetus and body, there is actually no movement here. The sound simply swings gently around a series of points. The same thing happens in 'Yearnin' ' and 'Teenie's Blues' except the more propulsive tempos give these a stirring, circular quality. 'Cascades' – written as a saxophone exercise, and one so efficacious that I recently heard Art Themen play a variation on it in a Stan Tracey live set – unwittingly displays how close hard bop configurations could be to schoolroom warm-ups, and 'Hoe-Down' is a skilful pastiche of call-and-response big band writing. 'Butch And Butch' is an almost unadorned blues, West Coast in flavour.

There's a lack of density about these arrangements which proves felicitous rather than lightweight. Rhythmic complications are flushed out to let the players breathe. The horn parts for 'Hoe-Down' are about the most difficult in that respect, with the clarion motif at the start turned into a chase figure and then back again. Haynes and Chambers aren't well served by Creed Taylor's production but their role is reflexive, sometimes virtually subliminal – hear the stealthy pulse given to the Monkish 'Teenie's Blues', a skeleton of 'Epistrophy'.

How, then, is this date so remarkable? Perhaps it rests principally with Nelson's choice of players for the date, the selection of a man with an exceptionally keen ear. The sympathetic balance of styles and tones makes the ensembles sing and gives the simple melodic content a startling glow. Freddie Hubbard's silvery tone can suggest either prettiness or an elegiac fire, Eric Dolphy's alto is the plangent cry one notch up from the leader's lugubrious holler on tenor. George Barrow takes no solos but his baritone is the key fourth voice that thickens the harmonies and turns the ear around. 'Stolen Moments' draws its richness from this secondary bassline.

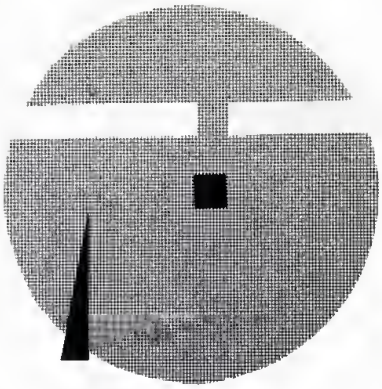
Out of this congeniality, inevitably, comes a series of solos on the themes which dance riveting new shapes from out of the blues. Hubbard might be prone to his usual rather pointless decoration in some passages but in 'Stolen Moments' and 'Hoe-Down' the freshness of his design (slanted by the romantic veneer of Taylor's studio echo) is lyrically youthful, touched with a real sparkle. If Nelson is the blues – listen to the lowering measures of the tenor on 'Stolen Moments' – then Dolphy is the abstract part of the truth. The way he breaks into the first solo of 'Yearnin' ', after the almost ecstatic AMEN! twist to the theme and into the anticipatory changes of 'Teenie's Blues' suggest a man who just can't wait to play. The sound he makes and threads through that massively intricate phrasing has human gurgles and sighs in its range, still tempered by the extra-linguistic accents that voices alone can't create.

Bill Evans has, frankly, a lesser showing than might be expected, perhaps because the major roles are all allotted to the front line. In his 'Stolen Moments' solo the music suddenly seems about to turn into an Evans trio performance and only the deadpan response of Chambers and Haynes keeps the tune on-course. In 'Cascades' the pianist wittily develops the flashier elements of Hubbard's preceding solo into something much more complex.

One could analyse such ingredients *ad infinitum*, and it still might fall short of explaining why this uncannily well-titled record seems so persistently playable and full of interest and surprise. Nelson tried to duplicate its success in a sequel called *More Blues And The Abstract Truth*, a good record but without the empathy and unpredictable spark of the first one. This music was well prepared, built for a certain team of players, and the lesson might be that in jazz a little forethought goes a long way. I prefer to hear it as a session that suggests part of the mystery of music, its secret quality – a moment when everything was right.

Richard Cook

SOUND CHECK



ALIVE
City Life
(Alive Records S43)
Recorded: Berkeley, California – 1984.
Janet Small (ac p, Fender Rhodes); Rhiannon (vce); Susanne Vincenza (ac b, elec b, cello); Barbara Borden (d); Carolyn Brandy (congas, perc); Mary Fettig (as, f, af).

The third album release, the first on their own label, from a damn good, all female quintet

Much of Alive's material is heavily percussive with Latin and Cu bop rhythms always heavily to the fore and although this may not be everyone's hot beverage it certainly has me turning to the album for some musical stimulation

The band is fronted by the marvellously rangy vocals of Rhiannon, a real campanologist's delight It would be simple to compare her sound to that of, say, Janet Lawson or Pat Longo but her stylising is much more in the Jefferson/McFerrin/early Jarreau vein and let's face it, anyone who's got some of any of those cannot be half bad

She is at her most dynamic and athletic on the zipping title track and the brushy Hendricks/Davis tune 'Four' but her crystal-clear pitch and scope is equally well heard on the album's two ballads, the sweet 'Anouman A Lazy Afternoon' and above the sombre cello sound on 'Happy Ending' the sort of music often heard in a film when the young heroine is seen contemplating her lost love in a long white dress and slow motion

However, Alive are best experienced up on them toes and you'll have no trouble putting them into good effect on the tropical rhythms of Cedar Walton's 'Afreaka' and 'Skindo Le Le' as well as the aggressive bop of 'What Is Life', three tunes that highlight Barbara Borden's el-stricto timekeeping and some poised and vibrant soloing from all concerned

There is some quite hefty lyrical depth to many of the tunes, most to which I can indirectly relate, but whether or not you find the sentiments expressed inspirational, fear not, the music most certainly is **Mark Webster**

GEORGIE AULD
Jump, Georgie, Jump
(Hep 27)
Recorded. New York – 28 March, 1944.
Manny Fox, George Schwartz, Jack Eagle, Sonny Berman (tpt); Jerry Dorn, Gus Dixon, Bob Lord (tbn), Georgie Auld (ss, as, ts); Gene Zanoni, Johnny Raffa (as); Irv Roth, Al Cohn (ts), Manny Albam (bs); Harry Biss (p); Morris Rayman (b); Lou Fromm (d). NB Al Porcino (tpt), Rudy deLucca (tbn), Irv Green (bs) *may* be present rather than Eagle, Dixon, Albam.
Recorded. New York – 22 May, 1944.
Howard McGhee (tpt) replaces Eagle (or Porcino), deLucca (tbn), Green (bs) definitely replace Dixon, Albam.
Recorded: Trianon Ballroom, South Gate, California – late July or early August 1945
Possibly: Porcino, Fox, Art House, Danny Pacciano (tpt), Mike Dantzenko, Tracy Allen, deLucca (tbn); Auld (ss, as, ts); Zanoni, Raffa (as); Joe Magro, Cohn (ts); Serge Chaloff (bs); Biss (p); Ed Cunningham (b); Buddy Christian (d), Patti Powers (voc).

Probably Auld's finest moments as a soloist were with Benny Goodman's Sextet, as a leader with such – Gillespie-featuring – items as 'In the Middle' and 'Co-Pilot', recorded between these 1944 and 1945 titles As he knew about bop it is not surprising that although mainly this music is conventional swing, there are bonuses such as four solos by Sonny Berman, one of the earliest of early casualties And if Serge Chaloff was on the Trianon bandstand it is too bad he was not heard from Auld himself was a highly respectable soloist, especially on tenor – a Hawk rather than a dove, as the second 'Stomping at the Savoy' proves He had others, too, like the little-known Biss on 'Mandrake Root' Basie and B G were this ensemble's guiding spirits and even such things as 'Poinciana' swing powerfully These men could play excellent blues, also, as a series of communing solos on 'Jiving with the Jug' shows **Max Harrison**

BORBETOMAGUS & FRIENDS
Industrial Strength
(Leo Records LP 113)
Recorded: New York – 18 October, 1981.
Donald Miller (g); Jim Sauter and Donald Dietrich (reeds); Tristan Honsinger (cello, vce); Peter Kowald (b); Toshinori Kondo (tpt, mutes, vce); Milo Fine (p, clt).

It's tempting to dismiss Borbetomagus as a bunch of musical charlatans Nihilists at best Yet there is such a complete avoidance of compromise in all their work that it merits serious attention The presence of luminaries like Honsinger and Kowald adds depth to *Industrial Strength* A valuable glance back at some of their pioneering work This is not easy music It insists on a kind of fraught attention but repays the effort many times over **Brian Morton**

ANTHONY BRAXTON
Composition 113
(Sound Aspects SAS003)
Recorded: Stuttgart – 6 December, 1983.
Anthony Braxton (Eb ss).

'It is midnight and raining at a small train station in Northern Africa and finally the old locomotive has arrived'

Anthony Braxton's sleeve-notes not only set the scene for his latest recording, they also lead us further into a new area of exploration for this astonishingly prolific and creative artist Braxton's interest in theatre, in 'ritual and ceremonial musics' has already given us the piece for two pianos and *Composition 96* for orchestra and four slide projectors He is also at work on a series of twelve operas and a piece for trumpets, costumes and choreography

Composition 113 – 'for one soloist, a large photograph and prepared stage' takes the form of an imaginary drama, its six sections the voices of 'six shadow figures', travellers on a train, who represent the 'character tendencies' of humour, acceptance, strength, dependability, courage and belief These figures speak in turn to the central character Ojuwain, who then has to choose between them The composition comprises this single dramatic scene, complete with dialogue, interjections etc, all 'enacted' by Braxton on his Eb soprano sax

Composition 113 throws up a few theatrical anomalies for example, the stage set – for which Braxton provides detailed instructions – evokes the station yet the 'action' of the music takes place on the subsequent journey Nor does Braxton ever explain *why* Ojuwain has to make his choice But perhaps more important in the context of a record review is that, as music, *Composition 113* stands on its merits

I'm sure its genesis as drama helped but *Composition 113* lives and breathes in the sound medium alone Braxton plays with total authority and commitment, and the music, as it unfolds through mellow rumination and frantic agitation, sets its beauty in a context of vigorous,



NEW YORK STRING TRIO
Rebirth Of e Feeling
(Black Saint BSR0068)
Recorded: Milan – 25 & 26 November, 1983.
Billy Bang (vln); James Emery (g); John Lindberg (b).

MICHAL URBANIAK–VLADISLAV SENDECKI
Recital
(Four Leaf Records FLCS073)
Recorded: Stockholm – 28 & 29 November, 1983.
Michal Urbaniak (vln); Vladislav Sendecki (p).

JOHN BLAKE
Maiden Dance
(Gramavision GRB309)
Recorded: New York – December 1983.
John Blake (vln); McCoy Tyner, Kenny Barron (p); Cecil McBee (b); Wilby Fletcher, Doc Gibbs (d); Alan Blake, Lita Blake (voc).

RIC SANDERS
Whenever
(Waterfront WF021)
Recorded: Location unsteted, presumably 1984.
Ric Sanders (vln); Robin Brown (g, syn); Jonathan Davie, Fred Thelonious Baker (bg); Micky Barker, Simon Phillips (d); Andrew Cronshaw (steel pans); Phil Nicholl (voc).

Does it tell us something about the state, or at least the geography, of jazz that the dullest of these LPs is the one made in New York? Perhaps the violin does not yet afford a fair test, although it probably has a more secure place in jazz now than ever before Aside from its incongruous membership of early New Orleans bands, there are obvious precedents – Venuti-Lang etc – for the New York String Trio The latter's music is very different, of course, being a matter of colour, texture, rather than of line, though Lindberg's intelligent bass parts are a frequent source of pleasure There are conventional solos, with and without accompaniment, and duets, as between Emery and Bang on the track 'Karottenkopf'; but this jazz is best when all three are weaving independent yet related lines, generating a sour sweetness.

Basically, they employ their instruments' traditional techniques, albeit with imagination, whereas Urbaniak makes an overt use of the fruits of electrification, sounding on 'Polish Reggae' like a horn, or several horns All these violinists major

on their own compositions but the roots of their music lie in many places Sanders tries 'Ain't She Sweet?', Emery (with the New York Trio) clearly understands flamenco, and Urbaniak revives the krakowiak This is a Polish folk dance from the Kraków region, in fast duple time, characterised by syncopated rhythms, and a good jazz translation is made here During the long 'Variations' (20' 40"), however, one grows tired of Sendecki's vamping basses He and Urbaniak have ideas but they are all rather the same, though 'Where We Belong' is bracingly lyrical

Sanders is known for his work with Soft Machine Certainly a heavily pounding beat is the main feature of several tracks and sometimes the synthesiser, rather than the violin, dominates We get to the violin playing, finally, with Brown's 'Rainshine', and accomplished it is, even if this melody and the treatment it receives are sentimental This is mood music, as is the folksy 'Calm Waters' Yet a considerable variety of percussive and rhythmic device is tried here and what this LP really presents is a group of young musicians testing their skills, exploring possible lines of action

In contrast, Blake is bland He plays with more spirit on McCoy Tyner's *Dimensions* LP (Elektra Musician 960 350–1) than he does here Even the fast 'Movin' Up' does not have the drive of, say, his solo on Tyner's 'One for Dea', and things get – again – very sentimental on 'The Other Side', where other Blake voices (Alan's and Lita's) moo behind him 'Beautiful Love' begins as a diverting exercise in something like Grappelli's manner and Blake's playing is at least sensitive In fact, he produces a more musical tone, and is better recorded, than any of the other violinists dealt with here **Max Harrison**

multi-faceted exposition

The relationship between Braxton's recorded music and its live presentation will doubtless become more complex – and problematic – the more theatrical his concepts become, for now, just listening to *Composition 113* provides ample reward Its qualities speak for themselves **Graham Lock**

CAB CALLOWAY
Jumpin' Jive
(CBS 21115)
Recorded: New York – 1935–47.
Includes: Chu Berry, Walter Thomas, Ike Quebec (ts); Jonah Jones, Lamar Wright (tpt), Claude Jones (tbn); Rudy Powell (cl, as).

With eighteen tracks, this is real value-for-money Not to mention the fact that not too many of the enclosed items get reissued that often Having said that, it is equally true to admit there are few recordings here that find the Calloway band at its jazziest Indeed the whole album is a perfect showcase for the hep vocals of its leader and, for this listener anyway, a little of Cab goes a long way Where there are openings for first class soloists, like Berry on the title track, for instance, they scarcely get a decent chance to get going Things are a little better on 'Jungle King', with trumpeter Jones and tenorist Sam 'The Man' Taylor getting off fine efforts, as members of Calloway's Cab Jivers segment from the full band Shame, too, that Quebec's emotive tenor is allocated only brief solo space on sides like 'Hey Now', and 'Honey Dripper' A disappointing release, then, and with appeal for only Calloway completists **Stan Britt**

VLADIMIR CHEKASIN
Exercises
(Leo Records LR115)
Recorded: Leningrad – 16 November, 1982; live, probably in Odessa – 9 July, 1982.
Vladimir Chekasin (clt, saxes, perc, g, vcl); Sergey Kuryokhin (p, vcl, perc, flt); Boris Grebenshchikov (g, vcl, perc).

VLADIMIR CHEKASIN QUARTET
Nostalgia
(Leo Records LR119)
Recorded: 17 November, 1983.
Vladimir Chekasin (saxes, perc, clt, wooden flt); Oleg Molokoedov (p); Leonid Shinkarenko (b); Gediminas Laurinyavichus (d).

All this right wing cold-war claptrap about Soviet jazz being a 'cry for freedom' gets a boot up the bum on Vladimir Chekasin's *Exercises*, where the Ganelin Trio's zestful saxist has great fun showing off his virtuosity and stomping all over a hatful of jazz standards

For some of the time he's joined by guitarist Grebenshchikov ('Exercise 1') and pianist Sergey Kuryokhin ('1' and '2'), who proves to be a dab-hand at barrelhouse and rolls out a zippy 'It's All Right With Me' that gains a certain humorous piquancy from the fact that Chekasin at the time is trying to play 'Bye Bye Blackbird'

The weakest parts are those stretches of 'Exercise 1' where everyone indulges in earnestly arhythmic plink plonks, but '2' and '3' are fine fun, the latter beginning as a tender dissection of 'Misty' that rapidly accelerates into a right Russian knees-up *Exercises* shows a comic genius on the rampage, I haven't heard a musician enjoy himself so much since Lester Bowie's romp through 'The Great Pretender'

The new *Nostalgia* is a more sober affair, though Chekasin's delight in riding a riff is still evident, as is his humour on Side Two's spoof-spooky start In the context of the Ganelin Trio his enthusiasm can splurge over into the merely garrulous but *Nostalgia* shows he can be disciplined, too, capable of succinct solos and sustained composition Perhaps it helps that he has a rhythm section behind him here rather than the polyphonic democracy of Ganelin, though even this can't cure his sometimes wearisome habit of simply speeding up a theme rather than developing it Funny on *Exercises*, here it's just a drag

Nostalgia ends with a cheeky burst of rock & roll but its most striking facet is a strong vein of lyricism, especially on Chekasin's horn where he gets a big-sounding, almost brusque, tenderness A jazz that's not steeped in the Afro–American tradition makes for strange listening but this Russian version, spacious and sprightly, offers its own fascinations It's all right with me **Graham Lock**

BUCK CLAYTON
Jam Session Vol. I
(CBS 21112)
Recorded: New York – 16 December, 1953.
Buck Clayton, Joe Newman (tpt); Urbie Green, Henderson Chambers (tbn); Lem Davis (as), Julian Dash (ts), Charlie Fowlkes (bs); Sir Charles Thompson (p), Freddie Green (g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (d).

Your archetypal mid-period studio jam session album In fact, the album which probably helped most of all to define one of jazz's all too-many silly jazz terms mainstream A sobering thought but these two stretched-out tracks were recorded thirty one years ago next month When first available here (on Philips), this album was greeted with more or less all-round top praise Do the contents stand up to the test of time, three decades later? Not completely Mostly because Fowlkes, Davis, Chambers, Green, and the warm sounding Dash are scarcely top flight soloists The two players who dominate this historic session are the trumpeters Newman is captured at (or damn near to) his very best on both sides, Clayton's beautifully poised horn carries the same basic warmth, control and tonal superiority as Newman but, overall, he just takes solo honours The Basie built rhythm section could never be bettered for this kind of date Thompson's bebop 'n' Basie piano spare, economic, swinging at all times is a treat, both in solo or as apposite accompanist Despite reservations, this is a record that deserves a place on the shelf of any self-respecting collector who is interested in the history of the music **Stan Britt**

CHICK COREA
Children's Songs
(ECM 1267)
Recorded: Ludwigsburg – July 1983.
Chick Corea (p).

The composer's brief sleeve-note offers no explanation of his motives for writing these twenty miniatures, so we can only guess if these are songs for children or to remind adults of some infant memory Either way, most of them have the harmonic and metrical substance of rhymes without the enduring simplicity which makes such folklore survive

Corea is beautifully recorded on a flawless piano but it serves to highlight the mundane level of his invention 'childhood' seems to be equated with left-hand lines that amble repetitively, like the slow swing of the rocking horse, while the treble explorations have disappointingly little of the mischievous scamper which informed his excellent *Piano Improvisations* records of 1971

Corea's touch has hardened over the years grace is in short supply here Since he hankers after a classical reputation I followed this with Robert Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, but these embroidered vamps are child's play in comparison **Richard Cook**



BILLIE HOLIDAY
The Lady And The Legend
(Rhapsody RHA 6025/6/7)
Recorded: 1949–1958.
Billie Holiday (vcl), with various musicians.

Feminist film criticism has focussed attention on how cinema is 'constructed according to the unconscious of patriarchy', which means that women in film do not 'function as signifiers for a signified (a real woman)' but that 'signifier and signified have been elided into a sign that represents something in the male unconscious' *

Apart from Robyn Archer's *A Star Is Torn* show, I don't know of any equivalent feminist analysis of music but the power nexus here must work in a similar way On the most obvious level, male critics tend both to see women performers in terms of sexuality and as often (mis)construe that sexuality in their own minds as see what – if anything – is really there Take the remark on a recent LP sleevenote that Julie London's voice came 'decked out in a sheer black negligée' here the male critic doesn't just make the voice into a sex object, he further turns it into a fetishistic object of male fantasy

I mention all this because I'm trying to find a way of understanding my unease about some of Billie Holiday's later recordings This unease centres around what Alice Walker calls those 'embarrassing anything-for-a-man songs' – songs, like 'My Man', 'Don't Explain', 'You're My Thrill', that comprised the greater part of her repertoire in later years In these songs women's dependence on men is portrayed in extreme and absolute terms, even, in 'My Man' and 'T'Ain't Nobody's Business', to the extent of accepting and condoning male violence What bothers me is **a)** why did Billie Holiday sing these songs? and **b)** why were they popular, what did people *hear* in them (other than the art of the singer)?

The glib answer is that these songs told the truth Well, it's a fact that Billie Holiday *was* cruelly treated by many men, and this tragic confluence of life and art does colour these songs with a quality that, for me, is harsher and more unsettling than simple poignancy

But whatever truth these songs tell is surely more than one of personal circumstance something else they make manifest is women's powerlessness in a male society This is an aspect of the music which I suspect is heard differently (consciously or unconsciously) by men and women

THE GANELIN TRIO
Non Troppo
(Enja 4036)
Recorded: Soviet Union – 1982.
Vyacheslav Ganelin (p, basset, g, perc); Vladimir Chekasin (as, ts, b clt, oboe, perc); Vladimir Tarasov (d, perc).

THE GANELIN TRIO
New Wine
(Leo Records LR112)
Recorded: 26 June, 1982
Line-up and instrumentation as above; add: Chekasin (basset-horn).

'Some groups tend to lose the inner dynamism as time goes by. With us it is just the opposite.' The Ganelin Trio have matured steadily to that ideal point where they sound like a single instrumental voice. *New Wine* and *Non Troppo*, two long performances from the summer of 1982, bring the trio's multi-instrumental approach to the level where the often-cited parallel with Braxton and the AACM begins to make sense. What they've acquired along the way is swing, not a spurious mimicry but something that emerges quite naturally from their own very distinctive method. They even have their own Russian term for that most American of musical qualities *dusha*. Ganelin, Vyacheslav and Chekasin demonstrate conclusively that jazz *is* an international language. If they're putting new wine in old skins, the results are all the richer and stronger for that. **Brian Morton**

STAN GETZ
The Canadian Concert of Stan Getz
(Can–Am CA 1300)
Recorded: Vancouver, Canada – March 1965.
Stan Getz (ts); Gary Burton (vib); Gene Cherico (b); Joe Hunt (d).

Watch out for Can–Am, a new label originating from Canada – especially if the music to be found within the grooves of this and another album (by Monk, reviewed elsewhere) is anything to go by (not to mention the generally fine sound reproduction). Taken from a broadcast from 1965, it is an interesting addition to the Getz discography, especially as it helps document further one of the tenorist's finest combos – one which never did receive adequate exposure on commercial record. Prime reason for this, of course, is the presence of Burton, already growing into a vibist of exceptional stature, with a style, sound and overall virtuosity all his own. Throughout, Burton matches his on-form leader for solo honours. Not only is his personal feature ('Valentine') a stunning showcase, his solo work throughout – try 'The Singing Song' and 'Waltz For A Lovely Wife' as well – is never less than extraordinary. Getz? That inimitable tenor sound illuminates 'When the World Was Young' and 'Morning of the Carnival' – both ballad statements in the classic Getz mould – whilst he leaps warmly through flowing solos on 'Froggie Went A-Courtin' ', 'My Romance', and 'The Singing Song'. Thoroughly recommended. **Stan Britt**

THE HARMONIC CHOIR
Hearing Solar Winds
(Ocora 558 607)
Recorded: Paris – 1982.
Compositions by David Hykes.

The first thing which strikes one in a masterpiece of traditional art is intelligence – an intelligence, surprising either for its complexity or for its power of synthesis, an intelligence which envelops, penetrates and elevates.

True music, like all sacred art, concentrates the faculties of the soul and relates them to spiritual archetypes. The Harmonic Choir has this power, creating images of the ideal plane, pure, subtle and luminous through their own nature, dazzling with a light as a mirage appears 'shimmering on desert plains'.

David Hykes has acquired a broad familiarity with the music of West and Central Asia, placing special emphasis on Tantric Tibetan Buddhism. By producing a fundamental tone or tonic note, the voice is used to produce harmonics, acting 'like a sonic prism, reflecting sound along a frequency spectrum, which extends upward from the fundamental tone'. Sounds spread out, scattering light and there rests in a wavery refractory which appears 'other' than itself. 'Men, in diverse manners, and according to their various inclinations, see the whole accessible through reflection' (Dhyana).

In many cultures, it has traditionally been the role of music to express a sense of the order of the universe – an order which man can aspire to understand and look for in himself.

The Harmonic Choir fulfil the same purpose. *Hearing Solar Winds* is a rare and beautiful record. **David Hogan**

NEWS FROM BABEL
Work Resumed On The Tower
(Rē Records Rē 6116)
Recorded: London – October 10–19, November 2, 3 1983.
Lindsay Cooper (bassoon, sopranino, as, org); Chris Cutler (d); Dagmar Krause (vcl); Zeena Parkins (harp, prepared harp, accordian); Georgie Born (b); Phil Minton (t, vcl).

CASSIBER
Beauty & The Beast
(Rē Records Rē 0110)
Recorded: Frankfurt/Main – April 1984.
Christoph Anders (vcl, Korg synth & sequencer, org, g, prepared cassettes, metal sheets); Chris Cutler (d, electrified drums, noise, objects); Heiner Goebbels (p, PPG synth, cassettes, b, g, vcl); Alfred Harth (as, ts, bar s, b c, tbn, pk t, jaw harp, vcl).

The common feature which binds Cassiber and News From Babel is drummer Chris Cutler. Yet the approach of the two groups towards recording, performing and composing could hardly be less similar. Cassiber's recordings are the result of unpremeditated playing and improvising together in the studio, with the two pre-composed songs (by Brecht/Eisler and Edwards/Rogers) being spontaneously introduced by members of the group 'to surprise ourselves'. News From Babel, in stark contrast, work almost entirely with predetermined song forms, creating the arrangements of those songs together.

To judge by *Beauty & The Beast*, Cassiber delight in exploring two distinct musical faces: they have a predilection for etching musical landscapes which convey the impression of brooding power held just in check (as, for example, in 'Last Call' or 'Under New Management'), elsewhere they allow this power to well up to the surface where it erupts with compelling conviction. 'Vengeance Is Dancing', which opens in full flight with Harth's full-lunged saxophone wriggling over urgent, pumping ensemble work, 'Ach Heile Mich' and the celebratory 'At Last I Am Free' demonstrate this capacity, and the intuitive intelligence they bring to such spiralling excitement. There is still room for the grim black humour of 'Haruspices' or the double-edged nursery rhyme/fairground quality of the opening of 'In Eine Minute'.

Cassiber straddle the worlds of both jazz/improvised music and rock (members range from Alfred Harth – recently found recording for ECM in company with Paul Bley – to Christoph Anders, whose pedigree consists of the German New Wave rock scene, with other members poised between) and by-and-large they succeed in drawing on the strengths of each, eschewing the excesses of either.

Detail proliferates throughout, although not to the extent that it did on their previous album *Man Or Monkey*, and the impression remains of four soloists working together to forge a common music from the diverse elements they bring to the session. Often they lock together with the coherence of a working group and it is hard to believe material has not been pre-organised, at other times their methodology produces a wholly appropriate complexity of musical activity that would defy the most meticulous notation.

News From Babel are the heirs to the Art Bears legacy. In that group Cutler supplied lyrics and Fred Frith wrote the music about them, Dagmar Krause sang. With Babel it is Lindsay Cooper who supplies the music, Krause still sings and the three are joined by Zeena Parkins (with Phil Minton and Georgie Born providing additional assistance over a total of three tracks).

There is an implicit comment on the nature of Cutler's lyrics in that Babel seems a logical extension of the Art Bears, it is as if the strict territory the Bears occupied has been given room to expand, it has an open quality where the Bears were tight and breathless.

Yet in her composition Cooper never appears to cnb from Frith, she has a unique voice of her own (even if the spectre of Mike Westbrook materialises just occasionally, most notably in 'Anno Mirabilis'). In fact Babel endorses the impression created by *Rags* and, especially, *The Golddiggers* that it is Cooper who has been pre-eminent amongst the ex-Henry Cow musicians

– ie, to generalise, with satisfaction, even perverse pleasure, by the former, with bitter recognition by the latter. It may be fanciful to hear a sub-text of protest in these songs but in addition to their surface statement of female submissiveness they also make it clear that a lot of men are shits and that domestic male violence is pretty much an everyday affair. (In the track 'My Man' the contrast between romantic utterance and real life is so stark as to verge on the bleakly parodic. *'he beats me too oh, my man I love him so'*.)

A further paradox is that Billie Holiday expresses this powerlessness through the one source of power available to her – the power of her art. There's a sentimental view which sees her art as shaped and fed by the tragedies of her life. In fact, the reverse is true. It's not just that her artistry is unmistakable from her earliest recordings but that her art was, crucially, the one area of her life where she had control, her weapon in the struggle for survival. This is true both literally (it was how she made her living) and metaphorically, in that it was through her art, her specific qualities as a great singer, that she gave voice to and shaped the vicissitudes of her life. This may be why she sang those songs, as a form of symbolic control, as a way of giving her everyday hassles an *authenticity* that could be heard by all. One thing I am sure of, we still have a lot to hear in Billie Holiday's music.

To business. These three albums are compiled from TV, radio and live recordings from the last ten years of her life and were originally available on ESP. Quality, of sound and performance, is variable but generally better than fair. The highlights here, like the Storyville tracks, the 1957 'Fine And Mellow', have been widely available for years; and, in fact, an almost identical three-LP series on Happy Bird – *Tenderly, All Of Me, Porgy* – has just been released in the UK via IMS.

Both the Rhapsody and Happy Bird sets share faults that are common to many Billie Holiday compilations: meagre and banal sleeve-notes (excepting *Tenderly*), incomplete discographical data, and tacky covers. The Rhapsody set scores on two counts: it has forty tracks to Happy Bird's thirty-nine (though to complicate matters Rhapsody has six not on Happy Bird, Happy Bird five not on Rhapsody), and it dates them all – something which the *All Of Me* LP mysteriously fails to do: even stranger, the track described as 'All Of Me' on that album turns out to be another version of 'My Man'.

Such carelessness implies a disrespect for the artist which is typical of capitalist record companies. These LPs rely on selling Billie Holiday as a myth – the Great Jazz Victim – a ploy which, like pornography, basically glamorises a woman's pain. (Curiously, the cover photo on the Happy Bird LPs makes her look as if she's just been hit.) But Billie Holiday did not epitomise suffering, she *articulated* it, and that she did so honestly was part of her strength. To refer incessantly to her vulnerability and sensitivity, to see her purely as a victim, is almost to blame *her* for her tragically early death. This is a mystification which only distracts attention from her real killers: sexism, racism and, at the end, in Mal Waldron's bitter phrase, 'an overdose of police'. **Graham Lock**

** Quotes from E. Ann Kaplan, 'Is The Gaze Male?', in* Desire: The Politics of Sexuality *– eds Snitow, Stansell and Thompson (Virago).*

in advancing their penchant for creating complex, adventurous musical structures and imbuing them with vigour and invention

The unique character of the Babel album is not only due to Cooper's compositional skills (although they play a large part) but also to the arrangements fashioned by the group as a whole These frequently revolve around the unusual caucus of Cooper's bassoon, Parkins harp and Cutler's percussion Best exemplified in 'Dry Leaf' and 'Arcades Of Glass', they have a brittle, jagged beauty· at once they aspire to the air but are anchored in the earth Spartan textures shift to become enveloped in churning momentum which belies the almost exclusively acoustic nature of the instrumentation involved Krause's voice rides in and above the arrangements, as expressive and piercing as ever

Both Cassiber and News From Babel supply albums of contrast and intelligence, music to move and satisfy The former employs almost entirely electric resources, the latter almost entirely acoustic, one entirely improvisation, the other a framework of songs Both succeed But with 'Work Resumed On The Tower', News From Babel have created an exceptional record· probing, moving, provocative, engaging adjectives cannot pin it down Suffice it to say that it is imbued with a quicksilver elusive quality which earmarks it as a very special release

Kenneth Ansell

ALFRED HARTH
This Earth!
(GCM 1264)
Recorded: May 1983.
Alfred Harth (ts, as, ss, b clt); Paul Bley (p); Trilok Gurtu (perc); Maggie Nicols (vce); Barre Phillips (b).

An unsteady set that seems to head in five directions at once Barre Phillips and Paul Bley, old stagers both, make some effort to hold things together but neither Harth's writing nor Maggie Nichols' voice are strong enough to harness all the energies on show The half-hearted surrealism of the lyrics merely gets in the way of some isolated moments of beauty and strength **Brian Morton**

BOBBY McFERRIN
The Voice
(Elektra Musician 960 366–1)
Recorded: Mannheim, Hamburg, Stuttgart and Koln – March 1984.
Bobby McFerrin (solo vce).

'Music Box' opens Side Two with a sleazy little tune you might hear in a supermarket Ten bars and you're gasping in wonder again, forgetting that this is one man's unaccompanied voice Only on 'El Brujo', after a flash of telepathy, does he get a bit of groundswell accompaniment from the German audience

McFerrin produces tonalities and changes that strike echoes (as they say) from Bach to the Beatles Lennon and McCartney's 'Blackbird' gets a definitive treatment here, along with 'A Train', Parker's 'Donna Lee', 'We're in the Money' and the James Brown shouter 'I Feel Good' No doubt abetted by the incredible new Beyerdynamic wireless mike, 'the voice' recreates everything from a horn section, a walking bass, an organ, to (almost incredibly) station zapping on the radio

Yet, Bobby McFerrin is no novelty act He has a sense of musical mission as powerful and as dramatically conceived as was Roland Kirk's Like Kirk he'll have to budge some prejudices For the moment at least, he sounds a man in a world and class of his own, capable of communicating a complete musical message at the toughest edge of improvisation (no instrumental props to fall back on) with great humour Be your own Walkman **Brian Morton**

THELONIOUS MONK
The Canadian Concert of Thelonious Monk
(Can–Am CA 1100)
Recorded: Montreal, Canada – 21 August, 1965.
Charlie Rouse (ts); Thelonious Monk (p); Larry Gales (b); Ben Riley (d).

Yet another first-class album of live jazz from Canada and the local Can–Am label Over 50 minutes' worth of top-drawer jazz by probably the best-known Monk Quartet of the decade – a combo which recorded prolifically during its lifetime, albeit with varying degrees of inspiration during its latter years

This gig – taped by the local CBS, in performance – finds Monk & Co at their collective very best Monk himself is in sparkling form – not too often can he have sounded quite so sprightly, nor are there that many albums which demonstrate so readily his own brand of sardonic humour (eg 'Light Blue') Relaxation is another hallmark of the great man's work throughout If it's Blue Monk you dig, then just grab an earful of the track with that title and delight in Thelonious' unique approach to the blues Rouse, too, is supremely relaxed, sailing through his solos with consummate ease – most impressively during 'Evidence', 'Straight, No Chaser' Riley and Gales offer impeccable support Recording quality is excellent The running order, however, is incorrect on the sleeve and disc **Stan Britt**

THELONIOUS MONK
Monk
(CBS 21117)
Recorded: New York – 9 March, and 6–8 October, 1964.
Charlie Rouse (ts); Thelonious Monk (p); Larry Gales or Butch Warren (b); Ben Riley (d).

Of the numerous LPs which the Monk Quartet cut for Columbia during the Sixties, this ranks with the best It finds the principal participants in particularly scintillating form, urged on by two separate but typical Monk rhythm sections (Warren appears on only 'Teo') Rouse, most notably, hadn't yet reached the stage when all too often he appeared merely to be going through the motions His two solos on 'Just You Just Me', for example, rank with practically anything he has recorded – before or since, with or without T M And his splendidly intuitive playing during such as 'April in Paris', 'Teo', and 'Pannonica' (tonally, one of his finest) is beyond reproach Monk seems to have been in a jaunty mood at this time Evidenced especially on both 'This Old Man' and 'Just You' Blues-wise, 'Teo' finds at him the top of his game And 'I Love You' – his solo feature – is absolutely gorgeous, timeless in quality, going back far beyond the birth of bop Highly recommended – with no reservations **Stan Britt**

ANNICK NOZATI
Annick Nozati
(In and Out Records IaO 100S)
Recorded: Not stated.
Annick Nozeti (solo vce).

Marlene Dietrich meets Meredith Monk Nozati's vocal improvisations, backed with the occasional synthesised chord, create an enigmatic narrative comparable only to certain kinds of Eastern theatre There are still, perhaps, too many muezzin chants, too many chortles and giggles – as familiar an out from awkward improvisational moments as 'Buttons and Bows' and 'Country Gardens' were in bebop – but generally the effect is shattering, still further evidence of the lively seam being exploited at the moment by solo vocal improvisers **Brian Morton**

MICHEL PETRUCCIANI
100 Hearts
(George Wein Collection/Concord Records GW 3001)
Recorded: New York Kool Jazz Festival – 1983.
Michel Petrucciani (solo p).

So much attention has been directed at Michel Petrucciani's appalling health problems that his abilities as a performer and improviser have tended to drift from view Petrucciani, like Keith Jarrett before him, owes his early break to Charles Lloyd, who offered him the piano chair, now, still only 22, he has emerged as a pianist of remarkable range, a true original

100 Hearts demonstrates to the full his ability to link standards with new material in long seamless medleys that could well serve as potted histories of piano jazz The technical grasp is extraordinary, beautifully articulated and emotional without a hint of flash or mawkishness The additional effects – strummed strings, whistled unison passages – are never intrusive The five-and-a-half minutes of Charlie Haden's 'Silence' must be one of the most profound – no less so for being simple – piano performances of recent years **Brian Morton**

OSCAR PETTIFORD
Bohemia After Dark
(Affinity AFF117)
Recorded: New York – 12 August, 1955.
Ernie Royal, Donald Byrd (tpt); Bob Brookmeyer (v tbn); Jerome Richardson (flt, clt, ts); Gigi Gryce (clt, as); Don Abney (p); Oscar Pettiford (b); Osie Johnson (d).

Pettiford was a tremendous kick to hear in person and his quality is conveyed by this admirable LP Gryce, then very active in such matters, probably had a hand in the arrangements but this music, directly swinging yet subtle, is typical of what the leader stood for The themes, many of them Pettiford's own, are excellent and bring out the best in the soloists on 'Another One' Gryce, Brookmeyer, Richardson and the bassist shine in turn The latter's best improvising is on 'Minor Seventh Heaven', 'Stardust' and 'Don't Squawk', where there is interesting background scoring – although the small ensemble is deployed to varied effect throughout There is a determined use of the clarinet, indeed two clarinets, that was unusual for this period on 'Scorpio', and the under-recorded Abney gets a welcome outing in 'Titoro' 'Oscalypso' should be compared with the 1950 version Pettiford did with an Ellington small group (Vogue VJD525) **Max Harrison**

GOLDEN PALAMINOS
Golden Palaminos
(OAO Records OAO (UK) 001)
Recorded: New York and Brooklyn.
Bill Laswell (b); Anton Fier (d, perc, DMX); Arto Lindsay (vcl, g); Fred Frith (g, vln); Jamaaladeen Tacuma (b); Davis Moss (non-rhythmic perc, Bertoia sound sculptures); John Zorn (as, clt, game calls); M.E. Miller (vcls, turntables); Michael Beinhorn (treatments, DMX bs d, p); Nicky Skopelitis (g); Thi-Linh Le (vcls); Roger Trilling (records).

DAVID MOSS & TOM CORA
Cargo Cult Revival
(Rift Records RIFT S)
Recorded: Brooklyn – March 1982.
Tom Cora (cello, cello-resonated objects); David Moss (perc, vcl).

JOHN ZORN
The Classic Guide to Strategy – Volume One
(Lumina L004)
Recorded: Brooklyn – 27 February 1983.
John Zorn (as, ss, clt, game calls).

FRED FRITH & HENRY KAISER
Who Needs Enemies?
(Metalanguage ML123)
Recorded: San Francisco – 1983.
Fred Frith (g, vln, perc); Henry Kaiser (g, etc).

At the root of Material, and now The Golden Palaminos, bass player Bill Laswell has been instrumental in fashioning a mix-and-match approach to contemporary music-making in New York He took Material into the pop charts with a disco song featuring Nona Hendryx whilst encouraging the likes of Sonny Sharrock and Billy Bang to perform with the group Now The Golden Palaminos take it one stage further using a firm rock anchorage he has reined some of the more extreme elements of the New York scene into minimal song forms

As with their (earlier) British counterparts, Rip Rig & Panic, bass and drums lock tight and are mixed high carrying body and feet while adventure and anachronism skate the surface of the rhythm They break up its monochrome veneer in a dazzling multi-colour mosaic, but never interrupt its drive Whilst the results can be undeniably exciting, it is disappointing that adventure and anachronism are never allowed to interact with the rhythm to the extent where their influence can be anything other than but marginal

Which is a pity when a brace of releases indicates the depth of invention on which The Golden Palaminos draw

David Moss, for example, is joined by Tom Cora in a flurry of giddy activity on *Cargo Cult Revival*, where amplified cello, voice and percussion produce rich, inventive and unexpected music It is essentially a 'busy' music – ideas tumble in an avalanche about the listener – that owes much to the European school of improvised music The

THE QUARTET
Dedications
(Konnex Records ST–S002)
Recorded: Holland – 23 December, 1983.
Gerd Dudek (ts, ss); Rob van der Broeck (p); Ali Haurand (b); Tony Oxley (d).

Four of the liveliest improvisers in Europe today in a set of exceptional warmth (as is perhaps appropriate for an album of dedications laid down two days before Christmas) Tony Oxley's drumming has never been more telling and imaginative and Haurand and van der Broeck provide the perfect complement Gerd Dudek is freed to stretch out in some of the most relaxed and amiable solos he has yet to record Highly recommended Very

Brian Morton

SHIVKUMAR SHARMA-HARIPRASAD CHAURASIA-BRIJBUSHAN KABRA
The Call Of The Valley
(EMI ECLP 2382)
Recorded: India – 1986.
Shivkumar Sharma (santoor); Hariprasad Chaurasia (flt); Brijbushan Kabra (g).

The pieces move, now few, now more
Here many, where before was one,
Here none, where many stood before
Time, with the Goddess of Death at play,
Sits at the chequer-board and rolls
Alternate dice of night and day,
And takes the pieces, living souls
Of all that dwell beneath the sun

Bhartrhari

It's rare, indeed, for a piece of music to come along that simultaneously lives in the present and also suggests the infinite *Call of the Valley* is such a piece A celebration in rhythms, delicate and fragile, it dances along, transforming notes and phrases, while weaving a wonderful magic carpet of sound *Call of the Valley*, as the liner notes say, is 'a tonal picture of gorgeous valleys, laden with tall green pine and china trees and sun-kissed, snowclad peaks of the mighty Himalayas' So, if you've had one of 'those' days, lie back, put your feet up and let the Call of the Valley take you there

This album can be obtained from Triple Earth Records 4 Bedford Road, London W4 1JJ

David Hogan

STAN TRACEY QUARTET
The Poets' Suite
(Steam SJ111)
Recorded: London – 2 June, 1984.
Art Themen (ts, ss); Stan Tracey (p); Roy Babbington (b); Clark Tracey (d).

It was a wise choice by BBC Radio Ulster to commission Stan Tracey to write this series of pieces inspired by five poets from the Six Counties Well used to the demands and pitfalls of festival composition, he avoids the lure of Celticism or programme music The roots of this music are firmly in the land of Monk, not that of saints and scholars If *South-East Assignment* (1980) veered at times towards pastoral, there's none of that here

The music is uncomplicated formally, relying on the blues and popular song Its impact comes from tight ensemble playing, the product of this quartet's six years as a working band and the strong identity of Themen, Babbington and Stan Tracey Clark Tracey comes of age with this album, although no doubt invidious comparisons with his predecessor Brian Spring will still be made His time playing avoids the heaviness shown on some previous occasions while the solos never lapse into banality

Jeremy Crump

McCOY TYNER
Dimensions
(Elektra Musician 960.3S0–1)
Recorded: Unique Recording Studios, New York – October 1983.
McCoy Tyner (p); Gary Bartz (as); John Blake (vln); John Lee (b); Wilby Fletcher (d).

McCoy Tyner is a happy man, back in the saddle with a new group album for Bruce Lundvall's Elektra Musician label, taking charge in the control room, laying down his most satisfying album for some years 'One For Dea' (dedicated to the pianist's youngest son) which opens, has one of those compulsive Tyner melodies with the musicians all sounding at ease and confident McCoy then tackles 'Prelude' solo, attacking the tune remorselessly from inside rippling into the theme with cascades of aggressive clusters John Blake is the proud father of 'Precious One' and is suitably decorative, while Bartz solos with great drive Tyner kicks a new groove into a trio version of 'Just In Time' to open the second side and 'Understanding', penned by bassist John Lee, allows the soloists to move over a bed of shifting rhythms Finally, 'Uncle Bubba' – the altoist's tribute to Thelonious Monk – closes the set with a joyous swing

David Yeats

VARIOUS
The Best of I Love Jazz
(CBS 21120)
Recorded: New York and San Francisco – 1939–1967.
Charles Mingus, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Toots Thielemans, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Wild Bill Davis, Count Basie, Aretha Franklin, Gerry Mulligan, Cab Calloway, Miles Davis, Louis Armstrong, Sarah Vaughan, Erroll Garner, Billie Holiday, Woody Herman.

Somehow, collections like these never work – that is, of course, unless you care to acquire a minimal amount of recordings by a specified group of artists, irrespective of style, era, etc Certainly, if it's variety you're after, then there's plenty from which to choose aboard this eighteen-tracker For the most part, the music is excellent – nowhere better illustrated than during Mingus' 'Boogie Stop Shuffle', Monk's 'Crepuscule', Basie's 'Woodside' (with strong, beautifully sustained Billy Mitchell tenor), Mulligan's 'As Catch Can', Davis' 'Budo' (avec Trane, Garland) and Woody's live 'Northwest Passage' – at 5¼ minutes, the longest cut Billie's 'Violets' is haunting, moving – even with the vocal equipment in tatters, and there's nothing wrong, vocally and instrumentally, with Louis' 'Mack the Knife' Good value, then, both from the standpoint of ample playing time and sheer variety but perhaps just *too* wide ranging for the average punter ?

Stan Britt



MEL TORMÉ
Lulu's Back in Town
(Affinity AFFBS)
Recorded: Los Angeles – 20 January, 1956.
Mel Tormé (voc) acc. by the Marty Paich Dektette: Pete Candoli, Don Fagerquist (tpt); Bob Enevoldsen (v tbn); Bud Shank (as); Bob Cooper, Jack Montrose (ts); Jack Dulong (bs); Vince deRosa, John Cave (fr h); Al Pollan (tu); Paich (p, arr); Red Mitchell (b); Mel Lewis (d).

Tormé Sings Astaire
(Affinity AFF107)
Recorded: Los Angeles – November 1956.
Tormé (voc) acc. by the Paich Dektette: Herb Geller (as); Max Bennett (b); Alvin Stoller (d) replace Shank, Mitchell, Lewis; Cave absent.

Live at The Crescendo
(Affinity AFF [D] 100 [2 LPs])
Recorded: Crescendo Club, Hollywood – 22 February, 1957.
Tormé (voc, p) acc. by Fagerquist (tpt); Paich (p, p acc); Bennett (b); Lewis (d); Larry Bunker (vb, con).

Your attitude to Tormé is likely to depend partly on your attitude to his material This is drawn mainly from that rather extraordinary body of music that was written, often hurriedly, for the ephemeral purposes of the American entertainment industry between the two world wars, the best of which has proved durable beyond all expectation and now appears set to outlast us all He does not take the songs to pieces and put them together again in an emotionally more complex way, like Billie Holiday Rather, he accepts their inherent romanticism but makes jazz out of it.

Indeed, there are few collections of such pieces in which the voice is given such uncompromising, and immaculate, jazz settings as the two 1956 LPs which are virtually perfect of their kind The Dektette, a sort of West Coast variant of Miles Davis's Capitol band via Gerry Mulligan's Tentette, was as much the singer's idea as Paich's. One's ear is drawn to the voice and to the accompaniments equally and this space could be filled by listing a mere selection of the arranger's subtleties, an instance being his model use of the french horn in 'Keeping Myself for You'

There is plenty of straight-ahead instrumental jazz, not only adventurous passages for the ensemble, as on 'Something's Gotta Give', but many fine solos – Geller in 'Cheek to Cheek', Fagerquist on 'Lady is a Tramp', Shank in 'Lulu's

ghosts of Bennink and Alterations, in particular, but also Honsinger and Minton, move briefly through the improvisation, though one senses that these influences have all been tempered by the New York musical climate Moss and Cora spin and gyre together in an ever-shifting whirlpool of relationships. working at odds with each other, in tandem, parallel or cross-chopping in a breathless game of tag The results are wily and unpredictable

In stark contrast to the music of Cora and Moss, Zorn's work is uncluttered, moving linearly from one sound event to the next, incorporating silence as an integral part of his chains of development (although not on *Strategy* to the same extent as in live performances and on some other recordings) He employs saxophones, clarinets, mouth-pieces and game calls – blowing, sucking, vocalising and sounding through water

Zorn's vocabulary is unique (although never given room really to flourish within the Palaminos), he uses it at once to give the impression of both stasis and irrefutable movement Fred Frith regards Zorn as possibly the key figure working with improvised music in New York, while Evan Parker has commented that he offers us a new view of reed music which demands our attention. This recording enables us to glimpse just what has marshalled their interest

Both Fred Frith (with a pedigree embracing Henry Cow, Art Bears and Massacre) and Henry Kaiser (with his affinity for Beefheart and his work with The Names) are closer to rock music than Moss, Cora or Zorn *Who Needs Enemies?* emphasises this, whilst acknowledging a more organised and arranged feel than its volatile predecessor *With Friends Like These* The latter approached a freewheeling, dervish energy which the more studied atmosphere here precludes

In fact, *Enemies* is a collection of rather relaxed and amiable tracks (with just the occasional sting in the tail), often firmly rooted in the blues and post-blues traditions and sometimes even curiously reminiscent of The Residents

Perhaps it is not surprising then if it is frequently Frith's guitar work which forges the strongest link between the Golden Palaminos' rhythm section and the 'surface noise' elements which they employ, although Laswell never cuts free of the rhythm here in a way that he allowed himself to do with Frith in Massacre

From the other side of the glass it is possible to hypothesize that the amalgam which the Palaminos represent may prove 'challenging' or 'disorientating' to the rock audience and the rock mentality But when groups from (early) Beefheart and (early) Zappa to Pere Ubu and The Residents, from (early) Pink Floyd to Cabaret Voltaire and Rip, Rig & Panic have garnered large 'rock' followings doing all this and more, we can surely also ask more of the Palaminos

On one level we can accept the vigour and excitement the Palaminos offer, on another we thirst for them to fulfil more of the potential we know them – from these recordings and more – to possess

Kenneth Ansell

Back In Town', and Enevoldsen repeatedly But the musical success of these LPs is not just a matter of good jazz backings hear the interplay between Tormé's voice and Enevoldsen on 'Lullaby of Birdland', or with Fagerquist in 'Tenderly' and at many points on the Crescendo set Always he sings with musicality and intelligence, deploying a craft that is highly cultivated

He commands great variety of phrasing, placing of rhythmic accents, stressing words, altering his tone of voice, his diction is just about perfect and he sometimes amusingly improves the lyrics Other effects are impossible to categorise, and, of course, all these things interlock On 'A Foggy Day' he actually does sound something like a velvet fog, while on certain of the up-tempo pieces the voice resembles a horn, and much of this music swings a great deal 'Lullaby of Birdland' is a fine instance and this has some of Tormé's superlative, because so musicianly, scat singing Other examples are 'I Wish I Were in Love Again' and 'It's De-lovely', where he gives us all the additional lyrics – and it is typical of Fate's minor interventions in our affairs that he should be so badly off-mike while delivering these especially witty stanzas

Such all-out performances as 'Just One of Those Things' notwithstanding, these are not only jazz records but are designed for connoisseurs of this type of song 'One for My Baby' is a quintessential piece of American sentimentality but on the Astaire LP, especially, there are many writings by *la crême de la crême* – Gershwin, Kern, Berlin etc And there are equally exceptional yet little-known songs here, such as 'I Like to Recognise the Tune' and Arlen's 'When the Sun Comes Out', once memorably recorded with Benny Goodman by Helen Forrest

This last is sung with great feeling by Tormé, as is 'The Blues' from *Black, Brown and Beige*, where we get Paich's fascinating variants of Ellington's text and textures At The Crescendo, Tormé juxtaposes 'Manhattan' from Rodgers and Hart's first show together (*Garrick Gaieties*, 1925) with 'Nobody's Heart' from their last (*By Jupiter*, 1943) That he says nothing about this in his announcements is a pleasing indication of how hip he expects his audiences to be **Max Harrison**

VARIOUS
Kings of Drums
(CBS 21113)
Recorded: New York and elsewhere – 1938–1958.
Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, Louis Bellson, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Sam Woodyard, Joe Morello, Sam Woodyard/Jimmy Johnson.

Here's the kind of curate's egg that is a critic's nightmare Especially, like this reviewer, if drum solos in general produce more or less an instant turn-off Especially, too, if not all the featured players can be said, in truth, to be amongst the very best

Greatest of the drummers here is undoubtedly Roach Yet Max gets short shrift indeed (1' 21") in demonstrating his particular genius Morello's witty, inventive, flexible and always musical outing on 'C Jam Blues' is a joy (it's not overlong, either) Even as a non-visual performance, Hamp's is strong, exciting ('Drums Fight'), ditto, Blakey's ('Hank's Symphony') But the contributions of Krupa (an excerpt from the classic Carnegie recording), Bellson, Woodyard (alone on 'Hi Fi Fo Fun', together with Johnson on the yawning, overlong 'Dual Fuel') are for the drum freaks only Pass **Stan Britt**

VARIOUS
Organ Boogie Woogie
(CBS 21079)
Recorded: New York – 1954–1966.
Sir Charles Thompson Quartet, Bill Doggett Band, Wild Bill Davis Trio, Marlowe Morris Band, Dick Hyman Quartet.

There's some good, solid music to be found on both sides of this unhackneyed collection – although the jazz organ followers will miss the outgoing excitement one finds in the work of Smith (Jimmy), McDuff, and Groove Holmes All very tasty, mind you – even though some might say just a little too tasteful Frankly, there isn't one single performance which could be described as a classic of the genre

Thompson's 'Heartaches' is short and ordinary, while Hyman's solo feature – no solos – results in just about the most enervating version of 'The Huckle Buck' on record Indeed, the finest soloist here is not an organist at all but the almost forgotten Floyd Smith, whose biting, blues-based guitar work completely dominates the cuts by Doggett and Davis (nowhere better illustrated than 'Oops') For the jazz-organ freaks only **Stan Britt**

SARAH VAUGHAN
Summertime
(CBS 21114)
Recorded: New York – 1949–1951
Acc. by orchestras of Jimmy Jones, inc. Miles Davis, (tpt), Budd Johnson (ts), Tony Scott (cl), Jimmy Jones (p), Bennie Green (tbn); Percy Faith, Hugo Winterhalter, Joe Lippman, Norman Leyden ('Instrumental Acc.').

Sassy at her most exquisite Keeping those irritating extra-adornments down to the minimum Concentrating as much (or almost) on the lyrics as the music With seventeen tracks, this is splendid value – and for the uninitiated, a marvellous introduction to the artistry of one of jazz's greatest voices Taken from an interesting period – post-Musicraft, pre-Mercury – the connoisseurs of the jazz-vocal idiom will be most interested in the eight items originating from two May 1950 sessions which, if memory serves me right, haven't been available for some time Here, Sarah sounds absolutely sublime, giving ample demonstration of that extraordinary purity of tone, the astonishing range, the acute harmonic sense – with everything beautifully under control Nowhere perhaps better illustrated than during 'Nice Work If You Can Get It' (lovely Miles solo), 'Goodnight, My Love', and 'It Might As Well Be Spring' Of the rest, 'Pinky' (with its effortless wordless vocal) is a real curiosity, 'Thinking of You' makes top-drawer singing sound ridiculously easy, and 'Summertime' is most certainly the definitive jazz vocal version on record All round a valuable addition to CBS' *I Love Jazz* series **Stan Britt**

NEW RELEASES

The following have been released, or imported, since the last issue went to press Except where a date is shown, they are believed to be recent recordings but no liability can be accepted for inaccurate information Listing here does not preclude a subsequent review

PEPPER ADAMS (w/Kenny Wheeler) *Live At Fat Tuesdays* (Uptown UP 27 16)
RAY ANDERSON *Right Down Your Alley* (Soul Note SN 1087)
CHRIS BARBER *In Budapest* (1962) (Storyville SLP 408)
KENNY BARRON *Green Chimneys* (Criss Cross Jazz 1008)
COUNT BASIE *Basic Basie* (1969) (MPS 821 291–1)
HAMIET BLUIETT *Ebu* (Soul Note SN 1088)
WILLEM BREUKER KOLLEKTIEF *Music of Ellington, Weill etc* (Bhvaast 8VH 050)
BUDDY DE FRANCO *Mr Lucky* (Pablo 2310 906)
ELLA FITZGERALD *Sweet And Hot* (1952–55) (Jasmine JASM 1045), *Sunshine Of Your Love* (1968) (MPS B21 290–1)
FRANK FOSTER & FRANK WESS *Two For The Blues* (Pablo 2310 905)
GRAPPELLI/PONTY/SMITH/ASMUSSEN *Violin Summit* (1966) (MPS B21 303–1)
STEPHANE GRAPPELLI & MARC FOSSET *Duo* (JMS JMS 033)
LARS GULLIN (w/Bernt Rosengren) *In Concert* (1975) (Storyville SLP 432)
BENGT HALLBERG & ARNE DOMNERUS *Powerhouse* (Phontastic PHONT 7553)
GIJS HENDRIKS *Kom Hup Loos* (HE B31)
ART HODES *South Side Memories* (Sackville 3032)
MILT JACKSON *Statements* (1961) (Jasmine JAS 77)
HARRY JAMES *Harry James* (1940) (Harlequin HQ 2008)
FRANKIE JAXON *Fan It* (1927–33) (Collectors Items CI 014)
OLIVER JONES *Live At Biddles* (Justin Time 1), *The Many Moods of Oliver Jones* (Justin Time 3)
JIMMY KNEPPER *I Dream Too Much* (Soul Note SN 1092)
LEE KONITZ *Live at Laren* (1979) (Soul Note SN 1069)
STEVE LACY *Two, Five & Six Blinks* (2 LPs) (hat Art ART 2006)
YUSEF LATEEF *Contemplation* (1960) (Affinity AFF 120)
DIDIER LOCKWOOD *New World* (1979) (JMS JMS 034)
JIMMY LYONS *Wee Sneezawee* (Black Saint BSR 0067)
HUMPHREY LYTTELTON *In Canada* (Sackville 3033)
JOE MALINGA *Sandile* (Meteor MOR 32034)
JAY McSHANN *Just A Lucky So And So* (Sackville 3035)
PHIL MINTON & ROGER TURNER *Ammo* (Leo LR 116)
MODERN JAZZ QUARTET *Echoes* (Pablo 2312 142)
DAVID MURRAY *Morning Song* (Black Saint BSR 0075)
ED PALERMO (w/Randy Brecker, David Sanborn, Edgar Winter) *Ed Palermo* (VHR 001)
CHARLIE PARKER *Bird At The Apollo* (1950) (Charlie Parker CP 503), *Live At Rockland Palace* (1952) (Charlie Parker CP(2)502)
JOE PASS *Live at Long Beach City College* (Pablo 230B 239)
CARL PERKINS *Introducing Carl Perkins* (1955) (Boplicity BOP 8)
OSCAR PETERSON *Motions and Emotions* (1971) (MPS 821 289–1)
SUN RA *Live At Praxis 84 Vol 1* (Praxis CM 10B), *Other Worlds* (1965) (Happy Bird B 90131), *Sun Myth* (1965) (Happy Bird B 90132), *Dancing Shadows* (1966) (Happy Bird B 90130)
DOUG RANEY *Meeting the Tenors* (Criss Cross Jazz 1006)
PEE WEE RUSSELL & RED ALLEN *College Concert* (1966) (Jasmine JAS 7B)
GEORGE SHEARING & DON THOMPSON *At The Cafe Carlyle* (Concord CJ 246)
SAHIB SHIHAB *Sahib Shihab* (1971) (Storyville SLP 100B)
WAYNE SHORTER *Wayning Moments* (1962) (Affinity AFF 126)
DON SICKLER (w/Jimmy Heath, Cedar Walton) *The Music of Kenny Dorham* (Uptown 27 17)
ZOOT SIMS *Quietly There* (Pablo 2310 903)
KEITH SMITH *Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong* (WWLA 0108/684)
MAXINE SULLIVAN *The Queen Vol 3* (Kenneth KS 2054)
MEL TORME & GEORGE SHEARING *An Evening At Charlie's* (Concord CJ 24B)
JOE TURNER *Kansas City Here I Come* (Pablo 2310 904)
UZEB *At Bracknell* (Cream 100)
VARIOUS (Butterfield/Hucko/etc) *Tribute to Armstrong & Goodman* (Timeless TTDS13)
VARIOUS (Ellington/Teagarden/etc) *On The Sunny Side Of The Street* (1934) (Phontastic NOST 7653)
VARIOUS (Jacquet/Vinson/etc) *Swing's The Thing* (1980–81) (JSP JSP 1078)
VARIOUS (Manning/Houdini/etc) *Barbados Blues* (1926–31) (Collectors Items CI 015)
PUTTE WICKMAN *Double Play* (Bluebell BELL 169)
GARLAND WILSON *The Way I Feel* (1932–51) (Collectors Items CI 016) **Compiled by Brian Priestley**

▶*continued from page 41.*

the small, tight band of the first four albums to a big band. Fourteen musicians played on *Super Kumba* (1974) expanding the range and widening the atmospherics of makossa jazz bringing in elements of Sun Ra's avant-garde swing and *Bitches Brew's* clammy intensity, all held within the saxophonist's (Manu had switched from tenor to alto) tight rhythmic leash.

Other notable Seventies' LPs included *Waka Juju*, *Afroviston – Big Blow* and *A L'Olympia*, a live recording of his second concert at Paris' Olympic theatre (his other live album, *In Douala*, was released in 1983).

He was now splitting his time between Paris and Ivory Coast capital Abidjan, West Africa's most affluent city and a mecca for musicians to play and live in. In 1979, he went to Nigeria to record the brilliant *Home Made*. Tracks like 'Ah Eric sans Freak' and 'Sun Explosion' synthesised the marching dance beats of West Africa and reflected a moving away from his makossa jazz, whereas 'Tropical Garden' was a slice of prime jazz/funk. But recording the album had been a nightmare.

Manu: 'While I was in Lagos, the electricity would be cut a few days each week. So you waste time waiting for it to come back on. If you are in a hurry you cannot make it and actually everyone's in a hurry because of the price. You must almost be prepared to do it for nothing, even if you've got financial problems. If you give up you've achieved nothing, you've got to try. After a month I'd finished the record and was happy and lucky to have done so.'

On to Jamaica in 1980 where *Ambassador* and *Gone Clear* were recorded (Island Records was, quite remarkably, the first British company to offer Dibango a favourable enough contract). Geoffrey Chung was at the controls and aimed for a rich, thick mix whilst not undermining spatiality, the good reggae producer's trademark. Sly 'n' Robbie, in Manu's opinion the best rhythm section around ('The equivalent of Art Blakey and Reggie Workman'), and many other reggae luminaries contributed but the results were somewhat vacuous.

Rolande de Courviour, Manu's long-standing Decca-France producer (now dead) had had the knack of bringing out the commanding qualities in Manu's playing whilst not oppressing the contributions of the rest of the band or dulling the sharpness of the overall mood. Chung sifted a mix where Manu's role was dissipated and the melodies and rhythms sounded congested and edgeless. The chic reggae makossa lacked bite.

1984 has seen Dibango joining cosmic funkster Bill Laswell's Celluloid label and its roster of celebrated and highly creative names. In addition to the single, 'Abele Dance', an album should be forthcoming early in the new year.

On 'Abele Dance', Manu uses his Paris-based band which includes guitarist Gerry Malekani who has been with him since 1972, percussionist Jean-Pierre Coco (since 1976), bassist Francis Mbappe and another percussionist Valery Lobe.

'Abele Dance' is an ingenious fusion of New York electro-funk, deep splashes of horn, needle-sharp percussion and cavorting bass all held within a futuristic production courtesy of Sunny Adé-producer Martin Meissonier. His mix, that all-too-vital ingredient in the sophisticated 'hard' dance music of 1984 is, in proportion, as complex and imaginative as any of Manu's styles of compositional arrangement. 'He's a producer who is always looking for something new,' says Manu. In many ways 'Abele Dance' is *the* sequel to *Makossa Man*, for its iconoclastic blend of musical forms from different continents and, of course, it is rhythmically infallable.

It's a crying shame that African music can only reach western ears in such fits and starts, crawls and leaps, so often dependent on the dubious tactics of the majors or the few enlightened enterpreneurs. Manu, though, is optimistic.

'I am, of course, hoping that "Abele Dance" will affect people . . . worldwide! But it isn't important who has the first big African hit this year in the West. Once it happens, others will come flooding. For there is so much music ready and willing to come out.'

Charles de Ledesma

The colourful Manu Dibango and his ten-piece band will be hosting a live dance-party at London's Hammersmith Palais on Monday, 5th



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▶ *continued from page 13...*

Yes – well, there was always dance music. When I was a boy I used to always dance to rhythm and blues and the rock & roll thing when that came along. There were things like the two-step, the Bop, the Lindy Hop etc. I used to play dances, too, but there was always listening music as well. I used to hear Gigi Gryce and Horace Silver, the early Miles Davis bands with Coltrane and those people – that music had heartbeat. People were in touch with that, *I* was in touch with that. So to say the music is not in touch with the heartbeat any more, I really don't understand that.

What I feel is that perhaps people don't hear as much – but then again, that might not necessarily be true because a lot of the music does get some airplay even though the stations are non-commercial ones. I think part of the problem in a metropolitan area such as New York is that you have so many people and as a result you have so many attractions, from the television to football to Diana Ross at Shea Stadium. Very often on one given night you might have seven or eight places with good groups playing. Consequently, that kind of competition for what is, to begin with, a small audience, just makes it that much more difficult for people who run places to make the kind of money that they feel they need in order to operate. And economically, for musicians to survive in a good, consistent way. There are so many of us – which is really not a lot when you look at it – but when you look at the number of people who support the music in comparison to those who support rock & roll, and that makes it a little more difficult for us to get consistent employment.

Then outside New York you have this vast wasteland with the greater part of 240 million Americans who hardly ever have a chance to hear this music because of what is being played on their local airwaves. In some of the biggest cities in America you don't even have 'a' jazz club – which is pitiful.

Is the music still supported by Black people within the Black community?

I don't think it is now as it was at one time, simply because it is played mostly out of the Black community. It has moved into areas that you might call a little more 'cosmopolitan', so that now you have all different kinds of people who come to listen to this kind of music. So now that it's not *critical* to the Black neighbourhoods, you have fewer Black people who go 'Downtown' to hear the music. Why, in particular, I'm not sure. I guess you might have to ask them. But the reason might be this, and now this is deep:

Very often when an art is being created and played 'now', the very people who it may be about don't accept it. For them it might be a little too raw, a little too painful. Most people who have problems usually want to escape and they want things that will be soothing, that will give them an opportunity – even if it's in the abstract – to feel good emotionally. They want to wish that they could be romanced, or be in a social setting that takes them away from the day-in and day-out drudgery and gloominess of life. So to present music to them that may be reminiscent of difficulty might not set too well with them. And so they may not feel good about it. They may not want to have to work for that kind of thing, they may want something to make them forget about what their problems are. And especially if music comes in a certain form which may be a bit, a little bit different from what one is used to hearing – let's say 'less recognisable' – consequently, they may feel that they don't want to deal with that.

It's a very interesting thing but I have played some African music for certain Black people here and they can't take that. They don't care for it. And when you think of that and you think of the evolution of jazz and the kind of intelligence, the kind of academy that goes into the formation of this music, and its European counterpart, then it sometimes becomes very difficult for people who don't relate to any of that kind of stuff to be in tune with it.

I would say this much – when they hear it and it's really good, and when they choose to listen, I think there's a kind of communication that is absolutely profound. But, at the same time, they don't get chances to hear enough and, also, they don't go after it. Many of the people who listen to jazz, Blacks as well as whites, are often people of an intellectual persuasion and they are people who might have room in their life-style for music that might ask for a certain kind of attention, a certain kind of giving in order to get something from it. People who have had some kind of background in, say, listening to non-commercial music, might be able to relate to some of the creative experiences that jazz presents.

But there was a period when people like Milford Graves were taking some pretty far-out music into the community and ordinary people were relating to it.

You have to understand that during that period – and we're talking about twenty years ago – there was a heavy political movement going on. That movement is no longer in the same form as it was then. Now we have a whole other generation of young people who know little about that era. And even though they may hear about that period and know about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, some of these people never even saw them. At that time we were in our twenties and we were relating to what was going on around us. It was dramatically easier to identify this music with the struggle at that particular time. Now it's changed to some degree.

What do you think young people are thinking about nowadays?

I'd really have to ask them. I would hope that they would try to take some things from the past and understand that. Seems like that would make their lives a little more comprehensive. That's what I did when I was a younger person. I found out about my history and I began investigating art and I found a whole treasure there. I found a bank for myself.

Unfortunately, all things being equal, maybe there are the same kind of things happening now as when I was a teenager. Some of us were into jazz and most of us weren't.

You have spoken about Black record companies not supporting the music . . .

I think that it's unfortunate that Black record companies don't support this music though, outside of Motown, I don't know too many of them.

What is unfortunate is that in this country where you do have many Black people who are 'of means', they don't want to invest in this music. The music is artistically viable. It's played and understood all over the world, loved by many people, and used by *Voice of America* for political purposes in Iron Curtain countries. And I can't understand for the life of me why some Black people in this country who do have the means don't want to invest in something which is legitimately *theirs* in a major cultural sense. But not just that, they can make some money from it. All of those other people have made some money from it, like Blue Note, Black Saint/Soul Note and ECM. And although they may not be as rich as Columbia or ABC–Paramount they still make enough money to be in business and for the business to be viable. Somebody like Motown that makes millions of dollars could even use some of their tax write-off money to employ jazz musicians on a subsidiary level.

It would be a mark of distinction for them.

Not only that but without jazz there probably wouldn't be a lot of that music that we appreciate today as being Soul. Jazz has liberated a lot of that stuff.

The people who write it down, and so on.

Right, of course.

It always seems to me that the spirit came out of the church but someone was needed to write it down in another way from time to time.

Just as we have brilliant virtuoso vocalists, brilliant virtuoso instrumentalists, we don't only have to play European classical music to demonstrate that virtuosity – as evidenced, for example, by the wide spectrum of African music. Many of those people are loved and appreciated because of their instrumental virtuosity. So why can't the extension also be appreciated here – and supported by the Black business community?

What do you think about the 'fusion' direction which people like Ornette Coleman are going in?

I think it has its place. I heard Ornette not so long ago and it was quite an event. He had two drummers, four Fender basses and organised that sound. It was in his own concept and the stuff was happening. It was swinging and it was good music.

...continues on page 53▶

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013K] **The Sound of Jazz** (complete version) **Henry Red Allen, Billie Holiday, Count Basie's All Stars** etc 60 mins B/W 1967
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▶*continued from page 51...*

Whether you might call it 'fusion' or some kind of evolution or like a *revision*, going back to an earlier form, is something for conjecture. But if anybody can find something that they're in tune with, that makes them feel good, that also relates to what has gone on before and perhaps gives some kind of impetus to something that may occur in the future, more power to them. I mean, Ornette was playing his butt off when he played the alto saxophone. He played the violin and everything, he was improvising. It's just that the form that he chose to place his improvisations in were a little different to what he had been doing before. And I don't see anything wrong in that.

Some people in the jazz audience get very nervous about all those electric guitars!

I think the true artist is one who does utilise what is in his environment. The only reason why I myself have not used some kind of electronic apparatus on my drumset is because I can't afford it. And I don't have the place to experiment with that kind of stuff. I live in an apartment and it would be impossible for me to do the kind of experimentation that I would need to incorporate some of this new stuff. And along with that, I have to make a living. So I have to get out there and work in more customary forms.

When did you last work with Cecil?

Not in any real quantative way since 1975.

Do you find this indentification frustrating or annoying?

Sometimes. Of course somebody as great as Cecil and such a key-figure: it's always good to be associated with great people because that means you have some of that greatness about you, too. However, I think it's too bad that those very people who see me or other people who have been related to Cecil, see Cecil first. It's their problem, of course, but because they may be writers or something, then, of course, they write whatever is in their minds. And when other people read that, then they may also make the association.

Then again, others reading the article may say 'does this guy or this woman know what they're talking about? Andrew hasn't worked with Cecil since 1975!' I mean Cecil must have had seven drummers since I left. I've had my own band since then and I've worked with other musicians since then – Leroy (Jenkins), Muhal (Abrams), Carla (Bley) and so on.

It could be considered disadvantageous because sometimes people might think that the music that I'm doing is still very much similar to what Cecil is doing now. And that's not true. Why should they listen to quasi – possible duplication, when they can listen to the great original still with us? Of course, there are elements there with a similarity but much of the stuff that I am doing now is not in the same format that Cecil uses.

What was the most important influence Cecil had on you?

Well, I would say the latitude in terms of developing rhythms on drums. The sky was the limit and the parameters of the earth the longitude. So in that light, it was *whole*. Whatever it was that I heard was always cool. I think only once or twice during the eleven-year period that I worked with him did he ask me ever to play a special kind of rhythm on a chart that he wrote. How it was always done, ninety-nine per cent of the time, is he would play his line, he'd give the notes to the horn players, and perhaps the bass players, and whatever it was that I heard and played in relationship to that was cool. I'd say 'Is there anything you want here?' and he'd say 'Well, you know what drummers do' and that was the end of it. We'd go on and play and we'd make it that way.

So, as far as me having the freedom to express myself, whether he was playing as fast as greased lightning and I wanted to play as slow as a ballad by the likes of Errol Garner, it was cool with him and it was cool with me. He'd just deal it that way. And if he was playing a real slow languishing ballad, and I felt like I wanted to play at a very fast tempo, then that was cool, too. That was the way we made the music and that was the beautiful part of the creativity. But there was no bullshit, the music was always taken seriously.

Walt Dickerson is another person who is also a broad thinker but I didn't work with him as long as I did with Cecil. Initially

Walter is as broad in the same sense. I play as broadly as I want, except that sometimes he plays things that are metrical which Cecil and I never really did. Even though Cecil had done things which are in 4/4, like blues and standards like 'Like Someone in Love' which he did with Kenny Dorham and John Coltrane. Ted Curson and Bill Barron, Buell Neidlinger and that vibe-player Johnny Lyttle also recorded metrical songs with him.

With Cecil I was able to know that I didn't have to do a certain thing a certain way all the time – which, of course, is evident in a lot of the music that I play now. A lot of it can be considered free in that sense.

What would you say your goal is?

What I'd like to continue to aim for is something that is artistically excellent, profoundly viable to the point where it touches people, and is intellectually *savant*, too. At the same time, I would like for it to be accessible. Some people say that my music is very difficult – I still hear that a lot. All right, so even though some of it may be difficult, I still would like it to be palatable enough so that people can say, 'Well, gee, even though it is difficult, I can still get something from it.' That, 'This man has a certain kind of humanity about him that says something to me, gives me something' – whether they understand it *in toto* or not. If I can be recognised as an artist that pulls no punches, dedicated and sincere in what I do, I think I will have achieved what I had in mind just about all of my artistic life.

In conjunction with that, of course, I must say that I would also like to have a degree of economic stability that goes along with the efforts I make. I would like to be compensated well because in this life most of the people who are celebrated are, for one reason or another, rewarded. ■

▶*continued from page 31*

wanted to portray in music. Like, what we do, we deal with music as atmosphere, sounds, things like that. We just move freely and arrange these sounds. This is what we would hope to be able to do in music, just move sounds around.'

Suddenly, Lester Bowie leaps into the room, waves his arms wildly around his head and unleashes several bloodcurling Kung Fu yells. For a moment Roscoe Mitchell's intensity vanishes and he breaks into a broad grin.

What's happened to your AECO label? I ask him. It seems to have been dormant recently.

'Oh, that's thriving. We're coming out with a new series of things early next year. There'll be a solo record by . . .'

'That's top secret, man,' Lester Bowie butts in. 'I've told him it's all top secret.'

'You told him that? Oh, right,' says Mitchell.

Just a hint, I plead.

'See, he's keen!' exclaims Bowie. 'He wants to get a *scoop*.'

'I can dig that,' grins Mitchell.

'Yeah, but oh, man, this is so *immense*. There's no way we can hint at this. It's gonna be the biggest shit in the *history* of jazz!' Bowie laughs uproariously.

And it's an AECO? I try to sound casual.

'We got shit on AECO you would *not* believe.' Bowie shuts his eyes and shakes his head in disbelief. 'We've got albums in the vaults . . . see, we stopped work on AECO 'cause we got busy with our current stuff but now – have we got some stuff for you guys!

'I mean, this is gonna *shock* you. And you'll be the first to know, OK. Just leave your address. *The Wire*? You guys'll go *crazy*! This is gonna be *front page*! You see, you'll say *goddam*, this is *big*!'

Big, huh? I say, edging nervously towards the door.

'You *got* it!' he yells.

Well, maybe. Right now I suspect Lester Bowie would try and

. . .*continues on page 54*▶

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▶*continued from page 53*

sell last night's farts as the wind of change. Still . . .

Just then, a young man steps shyly into the room. 'Mr Bowie?' he murmurs. 'I wonder if you could tell me about jazz?'

'Jazz, hmmm,' muses Bowie, a mad gleam in his eye.

Talk about lamb to the slaughter. I slip quietly away before the blood hits the walls

● **NOTES**

1. The link between Chicago's past and future musics is crystallised in the fact that release of Mitchell's *Sound* LP on the Delmark label was financed by sales of Junior Wells' *Hoodoo Man Blues* LP, one of the classic Sixties blues records
2. John Litweiler, *The Freedom Principle* (William Morrow), p 178. Much of the information in this piece comes from Litweiler's book and from Val Wilmer's *As Serious As Your Life* (Quartet). I'm particularly indebted to Val's observation that 'The structure of the musics played in the two cities reflected the actual architecture; New York thrown together, higgledy-piggledy and stifling, Chicago with its open spaces giving the buildings room to breathe' (p 119)
3. As an antidote to this perhaps over-romantic view of Paris, see Steve Lacy's assertion in *Coda* that the jazz recording scene in France at that time was completely sewn up by gangsters
4. Bass and Bowie worked together in the Oliver Sain band in the mid-Sixties. When she went solo, he became her musical director. Although no longer married, they still work together occasionally in From The Root To The Source and the Lester Bowie Ensemble
5. Litweiler, *op cit*, p 279.

▶*continued from page 25*

jerk-stop of a surveillance camera that takes no interest in what it records but works automatically. It is the antithesis of direction, the bulk of the action takes place either out of shot or on the fringes of the frame, a simple powerful technique provides a powerful statement about the emigrants' peripheral position in America, a concern that returns in all Meredith Monk's work: a passionate concern for marginal people, divided from the norm by language and belief and (in a concern that echoes the photographic work of Diane Arbus) in body, too.

The earlier *Quarry*, a silent 16 mm film, worked in a similar way. Monk has described the piece as a 'mythic' examination of history and has put on record a link between her locations and a Nazi death quarry. In the film, tiny white figures, de-individualised, emerge from behind blocks of blasted stone, shift positions and disappear. Humanity escapes from and is reabsorbed by inhumanity. Intercut are haunting images of apparently drowned near nude female figures, decked in flowers, reminiscent of Ophelia. In a play where everyone conspires in his or her own destruction, Ophelia is the sole innocent, a sexual and political victim whose singing is cut short at last by the element that destroys her. It is no accident that *Quarry* is silent; it is about the silencing of humanity.

Meredith Monk has managed to create, as she set out to, a musical language intrinsic to the voice. Much of her recorded output, notably 'Songs from the Hill' is little more than a documentation of that search and is unsuccessful heard out of context. Indeed, she does not seem to work on record; *Dolmen Music*, an unforgettable experience, is the exception that proves the rule. Monk demands a quite new and radical redefinition of music which includes even those ventures – film and dance – which seem only to have an incidental relationship with it. She is working at a level and in a way almost impossible to describe without banality or absurd generalisation. But she has created a body of work which, experienced and understood in the whole, makes a profound statement about the condition of our music and our world. At the end of all the crankings of mind, through all the by-ways of 'feeling' and 'meaning', there is what there was at the beginning: a voice looking for a means of expression and communication. If the song seems foreign, then I suspect that is because we have forgotten how to listen.

Brian Morton

Though nothing matches her live performances, Meredith Monk is available on record: Dolmen Music *(ECM 1197)*. Turtle Dreams *(ECM 1240 811547–1)*, Key *(Lovely Music LML1051)*, Songs from the Hill/Tablet *(Wergo/Spectrum SM1022). Still the only adequate approach to Monk's work as a whole has been Peter Greenaway's Channel Four film for the* Four American Composers *series.*

▶*continued from page 35*

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner was the best of the lot in terms of acting. Based on Alan Sillitoe's sensitive short story about a young athlete's refusal to be broken by the Borstal authorities, this featured a lively soundtrack by the Pat Halcox Quartet – he of the Chris Barber Band.

But the production which really caught the imagination in 1962 was on the boards – at the Criterion Theatre in London's Piccadilly. Langstone Hughes' *Black Nativity* – the gospel, all-negro version of the Christmas story – was hailed in jazz circles as 'the musical to end *all* musicals'. In three months, *Black Nativity* grossed £46,000.

THE R&B SPIN-OFF

In January 1962 the jazz world was a-buzzing with Alexis Korner's news that he was forming his experimental Blues Incorporated 'on a permanent basis'. He had already given the idea a try-out with the Acker Bilk and Chris Barber trad bands.

'Genuine r&b can be dance music just as much as trad,' declared Alexis, unwittingly sounding the death-knell *for* trad.

Alexis was heard enthusiastically extolling the harmonica revival: 'After all, Elvis Presley has recently been heard on record with blues harmonica backing. Who knows what may happen next . . . a real r&b hit, complete with electronic harmonica and guitar for the Top Twenty?'.

On 3 May, 1962, Blues Incorporated made their grand-ish début at the Marquee. Now, the line-up included Cyril Davies (harmonica), Dick Heckstall-Smith (tenor – straight from Ronnie Scott's), and Charlie Watts (drums). Most of the material was 12-bar blues, drawn from the Muddy Waters and Robert Johnson books. Jumping onstage to jam were pianist Stan Greig and a very tall chap called Long John Baldry on vocals and guitar.

In June, it was announced that Blues Incorporated would be going into the Decca Studios with producer Jack Good. The line-up looked like being Alexis on guitar, Cyril Davies (harmonica), Keith Scott (piano), Spike Heatley (Johnny Dankworth's bass-player), Nick Nichols (Monty Sunshine's drummer) and, possibly . . . Mick Jagger (vocals).

The British Blues Boom had begun . . .

By the autumn, trad fans and modernists were both confused by this 'new craze – r&b?'. Was it, perhaps, some spin-off from US 'soul jazz'? Won't *somebody* tell us.

One Brian Jones of London SW10 attempted to put r&b into perspective on *Jazz News*' letter page (with a delightful explanation from the editor – for the benefit of the uninitiated? – that 'Brian Jones plays guitar with The Rolling Stones . . .').

Brian said it all with this neat up-yours: 'Surely . . r&b is the American city negro's "pop" music . . . r&b can hardly be considered a form of jazz . . . It would be ludicrous if the same type of pseudo-intellectual snobbery that one unfortunately finds contaminating the jazz scene were to be applied to anything as basic and vital as r&b . . . Rock & roll has a far greater affinity for r&b than the latter has for jazz, insofar as rock is a direct corruption of r&b, whereas jazz is negro music on a different plane, intellectually higher, though emotionally intense.'

Any further questions? No? It seemed that British r&b could now go its *own* way, unhindered.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

JANUARY

- Trad mainstay Mick Mulligan breaks up his band

FEBRUARY

- The Flamingo's Sam Kruger discusses exchanges with US stars Horace Silver, Art Blakey and the much-talked-about John Coltrane

MARCH

- BBC TV's *Monitor* features a documentary on Dave Brubeck

APRIL

- Lord Montagu cancels the upcoming Beaulieu Jazz Festival, usually a cornucopia of delight for trad fans, because 'the bands I wanted aren't available'
- Acker Bilk appears on BBC TV's *This Is Your Life* (was *this* the kiss of death?)

MAY

- Blues Incorporated make their auspicious début at the Marquee
- *The Sunday Telegraph* creates one of the biggest gaffes in Fleet Street history by publishing a review of Errol Garner's concert – a whole *week* before the concert takes place

JUNE

- *Jazz News*' readers poll show the modernists in the lead
- Several trad venues close country-wide

JULY

- BBC TV shows the adventurous, specially commissioned jazz-opera *Dark Pilgrimage* (based on *Orpheus in the Underworld*) – music by modernists Joe Harriott and Shake Keane

AUGUST

- Long John Baldry, Al Fairweather and Sandy Brown discuss forming a big 'Ray Charles-type band'
- The innocuous all-British Richmond trad-jazz festival goes off without a hitch, despite the media's desperate hopes for a riot

SEPTEMBER

- The biggest-ever blues package hits Manchester . . . but manages to *miss* London – with T-Bone Walker, Memphis Slim, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, John Lee Hooker and Willie Dixon
- Scathing comments about America's bossa nova craze begin to creep in to the British jazz press

OCTOBER

- Graham Bond quits the Don Rendell Quintet to join Blues Incorporated
- The *Beyond The Fringe* revue (featuring poll-winning pianist Dudley Moore) is proclaimed a big success in the States

NOVEMBER

- *Jazz News* admits defeat and starts a 'regular r&b column', adding (hopefully?) ' until further notice'.
- Dave Brubeck tops the bill on TV's *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*
- Getz-Byrd's much-maligned 'Desifinado' inches in to the UK charts
- In Paris, John Coltrane causes a near-riot of over-enthusiastic French fans
- Kenny Ball's single – aptly called 'The Pay-Off' – fails to make the Top Ten

DECEMBER

- Johnny Dankworth, never slow off the mark, records 'O Pato' – to become the first *British* bossa nova record
- Manfred Mann announces his new band – Manfred Mann–Mike Hugg R&B Group with the intentions of producing 'something of a Ray Charles-sound . . .' (who *is* this Ray Charles?)
- The *Daily Express* carries a bleak headline 'Kenny Ball Sounding Last Post For Trad Fad' (it's official, folks)
- The Rolling Stones ('Wanted one bassist – must be r&b-slanted ') are heavily booked over the season
- Cannonball Adderley Sextet plays Paris with new pianist Joe Zawinul
- Christmas Day – *Black Nativity* is networked live on the telly (and my mum won't let me watch it 'cos the circus is on the other side . . .)

AND, AS FOR 1963 . . .

Promised for the New Year was another star-studded round of Harold Davison spectaculars . . . coming was the powerhouse big band of Stan Kenton (one of the first to break through the early UK–US exchange barrier).

Also – *ah*, at last – *Ray Charles*, Sarah Vaughan . . . and Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and Frank Sinatra (just a minute, aren't we on repeats here?).

BBC radio conceded and announced extended airtime for jazz with producer Terry Henebery threatening to 'do a sort of Norman Granz for the Light Programme' (*sounded* promising . . .).

And, lo – Charlie Parker's album *The Happy Bird* was to be reissued.

Alexis and Blues Incorporated left the Marquee for the plusher Flamingo. The Marquee promptly retaliated by booking the Cyril Davies R&B All-Stars supported by . . . The Rolling Stones.

As the Sixties gathered momentum, this cosy state of affairs – both here and in the States – was, of course, to be blasted wide open by the innovations (some were to say 'excesses') of the avant-gardists' no-holds-barred free-jazz . . . But that, as they say, is another year and another story . . . ■

The writer gratefully acknowledges the facilities of the Malcolm Jagger and Fred Dellar archives, and the much-lamented Jazz News *for 1961–63*

▶*continued from page 17.*

late-lamented Lennie Felix – both fine pianists in their way – would not have been my choice of accompanist.

I had phoned George Chisholm and urged him to bring along his trombone. I was rewarded with almost a re-run of the story of their first meeting, forty years before. As George excelled himself on 'Stardust', Benny just stood and beamed, his smile becoming broader and broader. When they did play together, there was magic for at least one member of the audience. Incidentally, it was their first meeting for thirty-eight years!

As I got to know Benny a little better during that trip, one or two surprising stories emerged. One concerned an argument that he had with Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson many years ago. Benny was trying to smooth things over, but suddenly Robinson pulled a gun on him. 'I hit him as quickly and as hard as I could,' I was told, 'or else I might not be here today'. The idea of this most polite of men hitting anybody is difficult to imagine, although there is something in the eye that tells you he is not the sort of man to take liberties with.

Another occasion was rather more humorous. While Benny was playing the Pizza Express, Carmen McRae was on round the corner at Ronnie Scott's. Benny wanted to catch her set and invited me along with him. For once at Ronnie's the red carpet was rolled out and we were soon at a good table enjoying the music.

'You know,' said Benny, 'I had her as my singer for a while when she was very young. I didn't think much of her at the time. I didn't think she would get anywhere.' There was a pause and he looked at me sideways . 'I was wrong!!'

I believe Benny Carter to be the greatest of living jazz musicians. Nor am I alone in that opinion. Ben Webster, himself one of the greatest of sax-players, used to say that he owed more to Benny Carter than even Duke Ellington, and indeed if you hear the two together on the Contemporary LP *Benny Carter – Jazz Giant*, now happily re-released, you suddenly realise how similar their approach is. Incidentally, if you can only afford one LP of Benny Carter that would be my recommendation. Together with Barney Kessell (guitar), Frank Rosolino (trombone) and the fine bass-playing of Leroy Vinnegar, no collection could really be complete without this superb set of performances.

So, to re-state the paradox, why does the name Benny Carter no longer top any number of categories in jazz polls, or at least feature in the top three? One of the reasons may well be that he never attempted to take jazz in new directions, unlike Parker, Ellington, Armstrong and even to a lesser extent Hodges. His sound, though instantly recognisable and in fact the first great alto in jazz, has always been that of a mainstream player. He seems to absorb what he hears around him and then play it better than anyone else. He has never been a 'revolutionary' by nature and if asked for his ambitions, tends to say something like 'Well, I made it today, I hope that I'll make it next week,' and maybe that's not the way to achieve legendary status.

Of course, playing in his group must be somewhat unnerving, for you know that whatever instrument you play he can probably play more on it than you can. And that may point to another rather strange explanation for his not featuring in the 'top three' game so often. The public tend to deify those who do one thing supremely well. They seem not to be able to believe that one man can do several things at that same high level. Maybe they just can't take it in. Somehow, versatility doesn't seem to reap its just reward.

Today, unbelievably, Benny Carter is seventy-seven, and although he's been to Europe, he hasn't been seen in Great Britain for seven years. Now at last, thanks to Robert Masters, he is touring again, in the company of that fine guitarist Herb Ellis and our own somewhat underrated vocalist, Elaine Delmar. Make sure that you don't miss him, for this will be no tour of nostalgia and memories of better days. Benny Carter is still at the height of his powers, still quite capable of astounding any young musician who cares to listen.

He is still the finest alto player in the world. Now, does anybody want an argument? ■

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